

NATIONALIST MISSIONS, MIGRATING CHRISTIANS:
A POSTCOLONIAL HISTORY OF A CANADIAN-KOREAN CHURCH RELATIONSHIP
AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA, 1898 - 1988

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By

DAVID ANDREW KIM-CRAGG

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ABSTRACT

The reasons for the decline of Protestant Christianity in Canada since 1966 continue to be a matter of debate among church historians. To date the context of missionary histories, global Christianities, and postcolonial migrations has not been adequately considered in this discussion. International Christian relations initiated during the time of the Missionary Movement shed light on recent changes in the Canadian religious landscape. From the beginnings of Canada's Missionary Enterprise at the turn of the 20th century, mission stations in Yongjeong, Manchuria and throughout northeastern Korea were the site of diverging religious commitments which were the result of different expressions of Protestant nationalism. This divergence created tensions on the mission field in the postcolonial era that migrated across the Pacific with Koreans to Canada in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Special attention is paid in this dissertation to the period framed by South Korea's Democratization Movement and the relationship between the United Church of Canada (UCC) and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). Ethnographic interview material is used to enhance and contextualize the archival data and is combined with an approach that seeks to balance institutional and cultural historical perspectives. The dissertation argues that from the start, Korean Christianity was at odds with the western version of Protestant nationalism, a defining feature of the Canadian church. It further contends that as the relationship between churches developed in South Korea and crossed into Canada, a new dynamic emerged whereby parts of the UCC were transformed by Korean Christians. This previously overlooked historical process situates Canadian Protestantism within a postcolonial context to reveal the persistence of Canadian colonial missionary attitudes on one hand and the ways in which relationships inevitably resulted in new hybrid identities on the other. This study promotes an understanding of religious and social developments in Western nations in conversation with global postcolonial religious histories.

Keywords: Canadian Protestantism, Missionary Enterprise, Korean Christianity, United Church of Canada (UCC), Korea Mission, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), Korean Democratization Movement, Manchuria, South Korea, North Korea, postcolonialism.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Dr. Arthur Wesley Cragg, who passed away while I was in the middle of my degree but not before he communicated his pride in me, even in the midst of this crazy midlife adventure. From my him I received a love of big questions and disciplined thinking and I still feel close to him when I read and write. Thanks, Dad.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

4.19 - April 19 Uprising of 1960

BOM - Board of Overseas Missions (of the United Church of Canada)

BWM - Board of World Mission (of the United Church of Canada)

EM - Emergency Measures

3.1 - March 1 Uprising of 1919

NCCCK - National Council of Churches in Korea

PCC - Presbyterian Church in Canada

PROK - Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea

PCK - Presbyterian Church of Korea

UCC - United Church of Canada

WMS - Woman Missionary Society (of the United Church of Canada)

WCC - World Council of Churches

INTRODUCTION

**To go back is hard; to stay is difficult.
How long must I wander the roads?¹**

Kim Sat-gat (1807-1863)
Song from Orchid Hill

“The truest eye may now belong to the migrant’s double vision”²

Homi Bhabha, 1994

In the summer of 1965, the Reverend Sang Chul Lee arrived in Canada on a plane from South Korea to serve a mixed Anglo - Japanese congregation of the United Church of Canada (UCC) in Steveston, British Columbia. Lee was no stranger to the Canadian church. He had been educated in a UCC-run mission school and studied in a Canadian seminary. Lee was no stranger to the migrant’s life either. Born in Siberia to refugee parents and twice over a refugee himself, Lee had fled once to Manchuria and later into south Korea following the conclusion of the Pacific War. Though he liked to style himself after the wandering poet Kim Sat-gat, Lee nevertheless had two constants in his adult life which anchored his sense of self: A strong sense of nationalism and a devotion to the Christian faith. And as Lee began his new life in Canada, he was convinced that he had something to contribute to his new nation and church.

From Canada, Lee and others in the Canadian Korean diaspora kept a close eye on events in South Korea and the struggle for democracy in which their friends and family were deeply

¹ 돌아가는 것도 어렵고 머물기도 어려워
길가에서 몇달이나 헤매게 될까

Kim Sakkat, *Selected Poems of Kim Sakkat*, trans. Keven O’Rourke, Digital Library of Korean Classics 25, (Literature Translation Institute of Korea)

file:///C:/Users/User/AppData/Local/Temp/KLTI_25.epub viewed 31 August 2019

² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 7.

embroiled. As Koreans struggled against American hegemony embodied in their authoritarian president, Lee's home denomination was at loggerheads with the UCC and its missionaries over an approach to overseas church work that they regarded as demeaning and oppressive. At the same time, Lee found himself fighting with Anglo congregations and church structures that seemed to be stuck in a colonial paradigm of missions that was failing to listen to the unique Christian epistemology Koreans brought to the Canadian church context. What particularly bothered Lee was the sense that their culture was not being properly valued, and the assumption by United Church of Canada members that Koreans had nothing to offer. "I felt then as I do now, that the Christian church needs to develop a new missiology which recognizes the value of indigenous cultures and traditions," he wrote twenty years later.³

The story of Korean Christian efforts to assert their sovereignty in a new postcolonial reality and the impact on these efforts upon the Canadian church provides a transnational, transcultural, postcolonial context for a history of Protestant religion in Canada. It is a story that helps to explain the significance of the last years of the Missionary Enterprise for the Canadian church and how, after generations of extensive mission work overseas that had inspired its congregations, the UCC found itself not only bereft of an animating vision for the post-sixties era but being challenged and ultimately transformed by the very people they had earlier regarded themselves as having a mission to convert. The UCC, in short, struggled to reconcile its own Protestant nationalist past with the cultural diversification of Canadian society and Protestant theology.

Historiography

³ Sang-Chul Lee and Eric Weingartner, *The Wanderer: The Autobiography of a United Church Moderator* (Winfield, BC: Woodlake Books, 1989), 86.

Canadian church historians have been exercised for some decades over the decline of Christianity in Canadian society. Far from a gentle or gradual process, this decline has been characterized as “the catastrophic exodus” from institutional religion.⁴ Hard data is used to confirm this characterization by describing a change that was “sudden,” “broad based,” “massive in scale,” and that amounted to a “seismic”⁵ event for the religious character of Canada. Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau have listed the different explanatory frameworks used to account for this phenomenon: changing attitudes towards sexuality, feminism, civil rights movements, the rise of radical politics and critical views of authority, new group and ethno-political alignments, rising standards of living and an attendant adoption of individualism.⁶ One of the first and most influential explanations for the perceived decreasing relevance of Christianity in Canada was Ramsey Cook’s, *The Regenerators* (1985).⁷ In this seminal work Cook provides a critique of the Canadian social gospel and accuses Canadian theologians in the Victorian era of betraying core Christian principles in the face of modern science. His argument, like those that followed, relied upon a link between modernity and religious decline, what Gauvreau and colleague Ollivier Hubert call “a master narrative of historical change supplied by the classic secularization theory.”⁸ This narrative asserts that modernity necessarily leads to the marginalization of religion and operates in both the institutional and social approaches found in

⁴ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, “‘Even the hippies were only very slowly going secular’: Dechristianization and the Culture of Individualism in North America and Western Europe,” eds. Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization in North America and Europe, 1945-2000* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 4.

⁵ Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald, *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press 2017), 57, 197.

⁶ Christie and Gauvreau, “‘Even the hippies were only very slowly going secular,’” 3-4.

⁷ Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

⁸ Micheal Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert, “Beyond Church History: Recent Developments in the History of Religion in Canada,” in *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada*, Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert eds. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006), 6-7.

contemporary works of Canadian church history.⁹ Gauvreau and Hubert, at the same time however, challenge this master narrative. They argue that attention to how the churches have addressed Canadian social issues in the 19th and 20th centuries reveals ways in which they have enhanced their social relevance.¹⁰ Numbers may not tell the whole story but consideration of the churches' approach to important societal concerns will help to better assess the nature of the change Canadian churches have experienced and are experiencing.

Recently, Phyllis Airhart's history of the United Church, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation* (2014), has pointed to the connection between change in the Protestant churches and attitudes towards the cultural "other." In this monograph she uncovered the racialized national vision which fundamentally shaped the UCC at its inauguration in 1925. Airhart shows that the union of Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches in Canada into the UCC was motivated by the perceived need for a strong national church to perpetuate Anglo Protestant values and the related fear that non-Anglo non-Protestants were endangering civilization in Canada.¹¹ Airhart's book covers the period between Church Union in 1925 and the 1960s and is an account of the radical deconstruction of the UCC's self-understanding as the national church of a white Anglo-Protestant nation. By the sixties, she contends, the new social reality of Canada had forced the UCC to accept its marginal place as one religion among many within an increasingly secular and multicultural Canada. "The crisis," she writes, "kindled a difficult but unavoidable conversation about its identity that continues today."¹² Importantly, for the purposes of this dissertation, Airhart's work includes examples of the ways the overseas Missionary

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gauvreau and Hubert, "Beyond Church History," 34.

¹¹ Phyllis Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014). 12.

¹² Ibid. 291.

Enterprise was integral to the Anglo Protestant nationalist vision that created the church's ethnic bias and yet at the same time also challenged institutional racism within the UCC.

Notwithstanding Airhart's conclusion that by the 1960s the writing was on the wall for the UCC's Anglo nationalist identity, there is evidence to show many of its original biases lingered well into the 1980s and beyond. UCC historian Joan Wyatt's essay, in the edited collection *The United Church of Canada: A History* (2012), asserts that as the UCC moved into the 1970s, UCC leadership became more and more preoccupied with voices of protest at home and abroad and with deconstructing colonial structures within their own church.¹³ However, Wyatt was unable to say to what degree anyone other than those engaged with such issues in the special committees of the church were impacted by the voices of protest that were channeled to institutional leaders, and often through missionary personnel. In her essay entitled "When Missions Became Development" (2010), Ruth Compton Brouwer asserts that while missionary attitudes were fast changing, the disconnection between missions and home church was such that the changing world view of missionaries and church leaders had little impact on the culture of the churches that had supported their mission.¹⁴ This observation is backed up by one church leader who, commenting in 1971, complained that the understanding of UCC parishioners regarding the church's missions overseas belonged in the 19th century.¹⁵

To the degree that missionary experiences in the postcolonial vortex of the mission field were not communicated to Anglo Canadian Protestants who supported the missionary movement from Canada, immigrants from these mission fields who landed in Canada were faced with the

¹³ Joan Wyatt, "The 1970s: Voices from the Margins," in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, Donald Schweitzer, ed., (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012). 135.

¹⁴ Ruth C. Brouwer, "When Missions Became Development: Ironies of 'NGOization' in Mainstream Canadian Churches in the 1960s," *The Canadian Historical Review* 91, no. 4 (2010): 661-693, doi:10.1353/can.2010.0027.

¹⁵ Ruth Compton Brouwer, "From Missionaries to NGOs", in *Canada and the Third World: Overlapping Histories*, Karen Dubinsky, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 137.

necessity of rearticulating their objections to Western colonial attitudes within the Canadian church. Canadian religious scholar Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng shows that their efforts made a difference to the church in Canada just as they had made a difference in changing missionary attitudes overseas. With regard to Korean Christian immigrants in particular she notes that in the early 1970s the first wave of South Korean immigrants began to arrive in Canada, simultaneously pushed by the political and economic situation at home and drawn by the new, more open immigration policy of the Canadian government. The influx of immigrants into UCC pews and erstwhile ethnically homogenous Canadian neighbourhoods, an influx of which the Korean diaspora was a significant part, led to pressure on the UCC to change its approach to ethnic minority congregations in the 1990s.¹⁶ Two things made the influx of Koreans particularly important to the Canadian church. First was the number of Koreans that became members of the UCC; By the 1980s Koreans were the largest ethnic minority within the UCC. The year Sang Chul Lee was elected as moderator there were 10 Korean congregations within the UCC, followed by 8 Japanese and 7 Chinese congregations.¹⁷ The second reason was that among those fleeing the political violence and economic hardship in South Korea were a number of prominent Christian dissidents. These would come to play an important role not only as expat leaders in the Korean Democratization Movement but also as leaders in the Canadian church, challenging received attitudes and structures. These Koreans were leaders not only of other Koreans in the UCC, but also provided leadership to the church as a whole and participated with other minority groups to try to change the church. UCC theologian Loraine Mackenzie-Shepherd says it was the arrival of migrants that led to a shift in UCC policy with regard to

¹⁶ Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, "The United Church of Canada: A Church Fittingly National," In *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 208.

¹⁷ UCC Yearbook, 1988.

ethnic minority congregations in Canada. She characterizes this shift as one from assimilation and integration to pluralism.¹⁸ Korean church leadership was an important impetus for this change.

The historiography of the Missionary Enterprise has up until recently been polemical, either painting missions and missionaries in a largely positive light or characterizing their endeavours as fundamentally flawed. In the specific field of UCC Korea Mission historiography, official histories written by church institutions, missionary memoirs and works of history by missionaries as well as memoirs and histories written by Koreans provide accounts of mission activity which, while at times critical of missionaries and their approach, are mostly positive in their assessment of missionary contributions. Examples of this approach include the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK)-published *Han Somang* (1998),¹⁹ William Scott's *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea* revised and expanded by Greg McMullin (2009)²⁰ and Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook's memoirs, *Giringapigwa Geumannea* (2006).²¹ These works largely avoid discussions related to conflicts between Korean missionaries and Korean Christians. Many scholarly works of a much more critical nature have also largely omitted treatment of disputes between missionaries and Korean Christians. Mission historian Fredrick Glover has pointed out that relatively recent scholarly works on the history of Canadian missionaries in Korea have only barely touched on the development and resolution of

¹⁸Loraine Mackenzie Shepherd, "From Colonization to Right Relations: The Evolution of United Church of Canada Missions within Aboriginal Communities," *International Review of Mission*, April 2014, Vol.103(1), pp.153-171

¹⁹ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang Anaeseo: Hankuk – Kanadakyohoe Seonkyohyeopnyeok 100junyeon Kinyeommunjip* (Seoul: Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe Chulpan, 1998).

²⁰ William Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea, 1898-1970s*, revised and expanded by J. Greig McMullin (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2009).

²¹ Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006).

tensions that existed in the mission relationships.²² Examples of such works include Hamish Ion's *The Cross and the Rising Sun* (1990),²³ Young-sik Yoo's PhD dissertation "The Impact of Canadian Missionaries in Korea" (1996)²⁴ and Ruth Compton Brouwer's *Modern Women Modernizing Men* (2002).²⁵

Another historiographical line has focussed almost exclusively on the negative implications of mission history for non-Western nations and peoples. This "negative" approach was spearheaded by Edward Said who offered one of the earliest and most influential postcolonial critiques of the missionary enterprise. In *Orientalism* (1978) Said showed how the language used in talking about people under colonial control was a major feature of modern political-intellectual culture in the west. Said contends that Christian mission societies, who sought to "save" the Orient, essentially contributed to a discourse that championed the expansion of Europe. Said argued that European powers basically adopted the missionary mindset, substituting the structures of Christian supernaturalism for those of modern Orientalism.²⁶ Said's later work, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), elevated the notion of "cultural imperialism" in the discussion of postcolonial realities, a concept that was first coined by Chinese communists under Mao Zedong to point out missionary collusion with imperialist agendas.²⁷ Said and those following his lead have focussed on the ways the missionary enterprise helped create the

²² Frederick J. Glover, "Friends, Foes and Partners: The Relationship between the Canadian Missionaries and the Korean Christians in North-eastern Korea and Manchuria from 1898 until 1927," *Studies in World Christianity: The Edinburgh Review of Theology and Religion*, Vol. 23:3, pp.197.

²³ A. Hamish Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun: The Canadian Protestant Missionary Movement in the Japanese Empire, 1872-1931* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990).

²⁴ Young-sik Yoo, "The Impact of Canadian Missionaries in Korea: A Historical Survey of Early Canadian Mission Work, 1888-1898," PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1996, 287.
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/ftp04/NQ27810.pdf> viewed 15 June 2019.

²⁵ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men: The Changing Missions of Three Professional Women in Asia and Africa, 1902-69* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

²⁶ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 122.

²⁷ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

conditions whereby the domination of non-Europeans was justified, the humanity of the colonized was concealed and differences that existed across colonized cultures were masked. In this way missionaries contributed to a Western projection that operated predictably according to the logic of domination. Mission historian Ruth Compton Brouwer has noted that scholars working in this vein feel embarrassment for even talking about missionaries lest they should appear to be an apologist for their activities. She has found a “widespread assumption” that missionaries were “men and women incapable of change, too rigid or obtuse to learn from new circumstances.”²⁸ Mission scholars such as Arthur Schlesinger, in “The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism,”²⁹ Greg Cuthbertson, “The English-speaking Churches and Colonialism”³⁰ and Susan Thorne’s *Congregationalist Missions and the Making of Imperial Culture*³¹ are three seminal pieces that represent this line in British missionary history. There are few examples of such works treating specifically with the Canadian history of overseas missions.

In Canadian Mission historiography until recently few have succeeded in charting a nuanced course between these two extremes. The United Church of Canada’s *Report of the Commission on World Mission* published in 1965 contains one of the earliest and most systematic critiques of the Canadian Missionary Enterprise. The Commission consisted of UCC missionaries, clergy and lay people among whom were distinguished scholars such as church historian John Webster Grant, UCC missiologist Katharine Hockin and religion scholar Wilfred Cantwell Smith. The Commission, though essentially taking an apologist stance on mission

²⁸ Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men*, 6.

²⁹ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., 'The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism', in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974).

³⁰ Greg Cuthbertson, 'The English-speaking Churches and Colonialism', in Charles Villa-Vicencio (ed.), *Theology and Violence: The South African Debate* (Johannesburg, 1987), 16-17.

³¹ Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

work, nonetheless applied a sharp critical lens. They described the association between overseas mission work and imperialism as “unplanned but inevitable.”³² And that while “ [m]issionaries kept a close watch on the morality of empire-building,... [i]n its impact upon Asians and Africans,... , the mission was one aspect of a many-pronged western invasion.”³³ In its most concise and pointed critique of the missionary endeavour the *Report* pointed out that...

missionaries tended to assume, rather than claim, the prerogatives of leadership in all phases of their work. Wherever they went, they had the aura of the West upon them. They knew what was good for their charges, and they spoke with the same tone of authority whether the subject was religion, sanitation or etiquette. The relation of Christian nationals to them was accordingly one of dependence and deference. It must be added, to make the picture complete, that the missionary did not have as much authority as he seemed. The final word was spoken by a committee in London or New York or Toronto. The missionary, like his counterpart in a colonial administration was an intermediary who relayed requests to headquarters and favours to his people. He was, none the less, an important person to know.³⁴

The Commission laid the fundamental limitations of the Missionary Enterprise bare. Canadian missionaries had been agents of Empire in their words and actions, at the service of the metropole. The *Report* went on to suggest ways that the missionary work and attitudes were changing, and how they needed to change, but underlined the good intentions of missionaries and their sending church from the start. Whether they convincingly managed to balance the negative and positive aspects of the missionary enterprise is debatable, but they did succeed in offering one of the first comprehensive and critical assessments of the work of Canadian missionaries connected to the UCC.

John Webster Grant, a member of the Commission and one of Canada’s preeminent Church historians, published *Moon of Wintertime* in 1984. This work constituted a critical

³² *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 312.

³³ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, 312.

³⁴ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, 313.

examination of missions to indigenous peoples within Canada, but was largely apologetic in its approach as well. In the 1990s scholarship appeared which focussed on the history of women within the missionary enterprise and showed, within the gendered space of women missionaries working with other women, how the undertaking was transformative both for missionary women and the women they encountered on the mission field. Ruth Compton Brouwer in *New Women for God* (1990)³⁵ and Rosemary Ruth Gagan in *Sensitive Independence* (1992)³⁶ have both provided such accounts of the significance of the early missionary movement for Canadian women. It has not been until the turn of the millennium, however, that Canadian scholars have come to a new appreciation of indigenous agency in treatments of Canadian mission history. This new scholarship has also begun to explore the ways the missionary enterprise was simultaneously transformative for both missionary and missionized – even if one or the other side was unaware of the transformation.³⁷ Alwyn Austin and Jamie Scott’s edited collection *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples* (2005)³⁸ is an example of this trend, showing how indigenous people in Canada and abroad impacted Canadian missionaries, their church and their society. This collection provokes new angles of questioning regarding the agency of indigenous populations and the mutual impact of the missionary enterprise on missionized and missionizer alike. Another strong example of a look at indigenous agency is Tolly Bradford’s *Prophetic Identities* published in 2012, which provides a history of two indigenous missionaries.³⁹

³⁵ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

³⁶ Rosemary R. Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992).

³⁷ Dana L. Robert, “Introduction,” in *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914*, ed. Dana L. Robert (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), p.3.

³⁸ Alwyn Austin and Jamie S. Scott, eds., *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: Representing Religion at Home and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

³⁹ Tolly Bradford, *Prophetic Identities: Indigenous Missionaries on British Colonial Frontiers, 1850-75*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012).

Bradford compares the experiences of indigenous people in the missionary movement in two very different locations within the British Empire. He shows that indigenous Christians worked to define themselves in ways which both drew from and pushed back against colonial attitudes of missionary and imperial influences.

Scholarship to date has, therefore, touched upon the following significant historical developments: 1. The birth of Canadian Protestantism and its roots in British colonialism, 2. the impact of immigration on the Canadian church, and 3. the significance of the Canadian Missionary Enterprise both overseas and at home. To date, however, no systematic study has undertaken to link these three areas of study or considered the connections between recent historical developments in Canada's mainline Protestant denominations and the events outside the West as they relate to the emergence of postcolonial nation-states, the advent of non-Western "Christianities"⁴⁰ and the phenomenon of global migration.

Approach

Writing in 1965, Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye suggested a paradigm shift for understanding Canadian literature in a postcolonial world akin to the societal shift Sang Chul Lee was participating in with his immigration to Canada that same year. Frye posited that questions of survival rather than identity were at the heart of the Canadian experience and suggested that for the Canadian psyche the question "Where is here?" would be an existential question of first

⁴⁰ Peter C. Phan, ed., *Christianities in Asia* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

Phan argues that, in Asia it is necessary to speak of "Christianities" rather than a unified Christianity because of the diversity of cultural and political aspects of the religion found there. The same could obviously said of manifestations of Christianity globally.

order, surpassing that of “Who am I?”⁴¹ In the world of literary criticism, Frye’s insights marked the advent of a postcolonial consciousness. The migrant reality, which Frye suggested was essential for understanding Canadian literature, continued to intensify following his publication of this idea and the introduction of the point system for immigration by the Pearson Government in the same year. With the opening of Canada’s doors to a greater diversity of migrants the questions “Where is here?” and “How do I survive in this place?” were of utmost importance to non-white immigrants to Canada. These questions informed their experience of religion and promise to shed light on church history, turning the Canadian missionary gaze back on itself.

Postcolonial literary theorist Homi Bhabha offered essential intellectual tools with which to understand postcolonial immigrant experience. His work focused on the inequalities and injustices experienced by those who were marginalized by the colonial political economy and noted that the concept of culture was used to create distinct groups of people and alienate the oppressor from the oppressed. But he also provided scope to imagine how those unequal relationships can be changed in ways that don’t simply entail a reversal of oppression. Bhabha’s postcolonial theory offered tools to identify the sometimes-subtle projections of power, which affected both colonized and colonizer, and which can potentially lead to mutual recognition and new constructive relationships. The concepts of ‘third space’, ‘liminal space’ and ‘hybridity’ suggest ways relationships have been shaped by (and are sometimes able to escape) colonial limitations. Against the duality that is created through colonialist differentiation they reveal alternatives, middle ground and creative new possibilities, which help the historian to identify moments of mutual transformation.

⁴¹ Northrop Frye, “Conclusion”, *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*, Carl F. Flinck gen. ed., Alfred Bailey, Claude Bissell, Roy Daniells, Northrop Frye, Desmond Pacey eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 825.

Postcolonial theorist Mary Louise Pratt's approach included the idea of 'the contact zone.'⁴² This concept provides a nuanced understanding of the uneven relations under which colonized and colonizer met and negotiated new relationships and identities, often with a degree of divergence and mutual misunderstanding. Postcolonial theories about the intersection of the social categories of race, gender and class informed this theory. In the case of the Korean-Canadian church relationship the contact zone describes the "mission field," the intellectual and cultural space in which UCC missionary and Korean Christian met and responded to religious and political pressures. John Sutton Lutz has suggested that the notion of contact zones need not apply only to a geographical area where encounters between colonized and colonizer occur, but also to a temporal period characterized by a specific kind of encounter. He argues that North Americans continue to inhabit a contact zone that is often mistakenly imagined as the historical singularity of first contact between settler and indigenous people. The fact that contact zones persist is revealed by the continuity of the mythology embedded in stories used by colonized and colonizer to talk about one another for centuries.⁴³ In the same volume, Keith Carlson argues that contact (the process of trying to understand the other) is best thought of as an ongoing and repetitive process that occurs repeatedly over time. With each effort to develop a more sophisticated metaphor of understanding across a cultural gap we draw closer to the ever-elusive goal of being able to see the world through the eyes of the other. The trick is to never remain satisfied with any particular metaphor.⁴⁴ These concepts inform this dissertation and will be used to help us to imagine an encounter between Canadian and Korean Christians that extended

⁴² John Sutton Lutz, "Introduction," in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, ed. John Sutton Lutz (Vancouver: UBCPress, 2007). 4-5.

⁴³ Keith Thor Carlson, "Reflections on Indigenous History and Memory: Reconstructing and Reconsidering Contact," *ibid.* 46-68.

temporally over decades and expanded geographically to include locations in Korea, Manchuria and Canada.

In addition to postcolonial considerations, any history of the church in Canada needs also to contend with the relationship between institutional and social approaches to history. Given the traditional relationship between churches and western nation-states it is not surprising that those who study Canadian church history, like those who study Canadian national history, debate the approach that should be used to describe and explain the changes they see. For church historians the tension between accounts that privilege the decisions of church policy makers vs. those that focus on the culture of people in the pews has defined much of the scholarship since the 1960s.⁴⁴ The debate between the relative importance of social vs institutional histories has challenged both historians of Canada and of the Canadian church to find a balance between institutional and cultural perspectives.⁴⁵

In a related discussion, Canadian historian Gerald Friesen points out that histories of immigrants in Canada force historians to combine the social and institutional approaches. In an article contributed to a collection in honour of Carl Berger entitled “Cultural Diversity in Prairie Canada and the Writing of National History,” Friesen showed how the histories of immigrants to Canada require that issues of gender and race be fore-fronted, but that immigrant views on these topics would lose their meaning if historians were not cognisant of the “national frame” within which they emerged.⁴⁶ In Friesen’s words, to write a history “and find an unbroken series of positive images of the nation-state would be a travesty. To deny the relevance of the nation-

⁴⁴ Gauvreau and Hubert, “Beyond Church History,” 7.

⁴⁵ Gauvreau and Hubert, “Beyond Church History,” 6.

⁴⁶ Gerald Friesen, “Cultural Diversity in Prairie Canada and the Writing of National History”, in *Thinkers and Dreamers: Historical Essays in Honour of Carl Berger*, eds. Gerald Friesen and Doug Owsram (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 262.

state's history would also be folly."⁴⁷ A study of religion in Canada, especially one that considers the migration of religious practitioners, needs to find a similar balance between social and institutional history in the interplay between culture, church and nation.

What Follows

While focussing largely on events that happened in Korea, this dissertation will resist the inclination to be about the significance of those events for the Korean church and society. Rather, its novelty will be to show how encounters in the mission contact zone shaped Canadians and had consequences for the culture and institution of the Canadian church. Analyzing the change that occurred within the institutions and culture of Canada's largest Protestant denomination, it will offer an account of changes within the UCC Korea Mission and within the UCC itself that were related to one another and precipitated largely by Koreans. Records show that the period between 1960 and 1988 marked a time during which Korean Christians became increasingly active in opposing Canadian missionary and UCC church practices, practices which they saw as oppressive to themselves in both the Korean and Canadian contexts. Perhaps not coincidentally, the period also bookends the South Korean struggle against military rule (1961-1987) in which a part of the Korean church was actively involved in a struggle to assert Korean sovereignty over Korean institutions. In 1961, the year that general Park Chung Hee staged a coup to overthrow the democratically elected South Korean government, the Korean church shocked the UCC by rejecting mission funding because of what it saw as undue restrictions being placed on how it was able to spend those funds. Both events signalled a new postcolonial context for nation states and the Christian religion broadly. Over the course of the next 26 years

⁴⁷ Friesen, "Cultural Diversity in Prairie Canada and the Writing of National History," 262.

Korean and Canadian Christians continued to wrestle with each other in that new context. In the process of this engagement Christianity was reshaped in both Korea and Canada. By 1987, mass popular demonstrations succeeded in re-establishing a democratically elected civilian government and the numbers of Korean immigrants in the UCC swelled while the Anglo membership of the church was in sharp decline. In 1988 the UCC elected a South Korean Christian political activist named Sang Chul Lee as its spiritual leader.

How were these changes related? Why did Korean Christians associated with the UCC push for changes at this time? What impact did they have on Canadian missionaries and the on church in Canada? Can their experiences shed light on the dramatic changes of the UCC and the Canadian Protestant church? The work that follows seeks answers to these questions in a way that features developments outside the context of domestic Canadian history. It uncovers links between changes to the Canadian Protestant church and broader developments outside of Canada and outside of “the West” with a focused eye on the post-colonial context of Korea.

My argument is threefold: First, Anglo Protestant nationalism, defined as a pro-colonial bias and commitment to Christendom as a religio-political world order that privileged Western Christianity and supported British-American hegemony, was a source of tension between Koreans and Canadians in the mission contact zone. Second, Korean Christians who associated with Canadian missions and the Canadian church (the Presbyterian Church in Canada up until 1925 and the UCC thereafter) reacted against and acted to exert pressure on these institutions and their members to correct their biased approach to the non-Anglo other finally succeeding in changing missionary culture. Third, the difficulties Korean Christians encountered when confronting the tradition of Anglo Protestant nationalism in the UCC provides a helpful context within which to explain the dramatic institutional decline of Canadian Protestantism post-1965.

These three points can be summarized into a single thesis statement as follows: Korean Christians in the mission contact zone both in Korea and Canada unrelentingly resisted aspects of Canadian Protestantism they encountered in missionaries and church institutions that were incongruent with healthy intercultural relationships and in the process threw light on the inadequacies of traditional Canadian Protestant culture and institutions in the postcolonial era while simultaneously transforming it through their participation in it.

These arguments shall be made over the course of six chapters. The first chapter examines the beginnings of the Canadian Protestant mission to Korea, 1898 to 1942, with special attention to its station in Manchuria. This chapter gives historical context to the chapters that follow, showing that Korean Christian converts, inspired by their own version of Protestant nationalism, created a context which threw Canadian missionaries' nationalism into relief and signaled tensions that would significantly define the relationship in the postcolonial era. The second chapter looks at the beginning of the postcolonial democratization movement in South Korea and the impact of rising postcolonial sentiments on the UCC Korea Mission as members of the Korean church associated with that mission rose to assert their sovereignty in matters related to the Korean church. Chapter three then focuses on the Korean demands that led to the end of the UCC Korea Mission as such and a radical change in the culture of Canadian missionaries working in Korea. Chapter four describes how the end of the UCC Korea Mission contributed to the articulation of a novel Korean theology, which defined itself in opposition to a missionary theology and practice that privileged the western church and promoted western political hegemony. Chapter five offers a glimpse into the ways a tradition of intimate, gendered, intercultural spaces arising out of the missionary tradition played a role in the South Korean Democratization Movement and changed the lives of female Canadian missionaries and church

leaders in the process. Finally, chapter six explores the pioneering lives of Korean Christian immigrants to Canada, their experiences within the UCC and their efforts to address issues of cultural and racial bias within the Canadian church and society.

Sources

Archived, written records of events of the Korean-Canadian mission relationship between 1960 and 1988 can be found in different places. The United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto contains missionary correspondence, missionary reports, church committee reports and a variety of other documents that can be used to reconstruct a history of the Korea-Canadian church partnership and of Korean immigration and involvement in the Canadian church. The University of Toronto Special Collection on Democracy and Human Rights in Korea held at the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library contains documents from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s curated by UCC missionary Fred Bayliss. The UCLA Archival Collection on Democracy and Unification in Korea located in Los Angeles contains the minutes of meetings and correspondence of expat Koreans as well as documents related to Canadian and American missionaries' work to promote human rights and a transition to democratic government in South Korea. Other church archives in Canada and private or university archives in Korea supplement material from these three main archival sources.

There are large gaps in these archival source bases, however. Much of what there is still to learn about the history of Koreans associated with the Canadian mission to Korea and the Canadian church resides in the living memory of Korean church members. While church bureaucracies and mission committees left significant records of events and missionaries themselves recorded many aspects of their lives and interactions with Koreans, church and

archival records contain precious few Korean perspectives. Collections of material relative to Korean migration to Canada are only just starting to be created. Those people who were involved with Canadian missionaries and the establishment of Korean congregations in Canada are now quickly passing away, a fact that lends urgency to the project. Semi-structured interviews with these actors will form an important historical data base for this study. This constitutes a second and very important source of historical information. Oral histories are nuanced and complex, often locations where official histories are contested, as Ruth Sanz Sabido has beautifully shown in *Memories of the Spanish Civil War*.⁴⁸ My interviewees were sometimes themselves consciously reinforcing or contesting official histories. Their testimony was likely also shaped to varying degrees by my social location as the interviewer. I have tried to take these facts and nuances into account. But these facts do not diminish the importance of the information which these interviews were able to provide. Ethnographic sources used in the dissertation new insights into the development of the Korea-Canadian church relationship which are unavailable in documentary sources.

Finally, sources exist in missionary and Korean Christian writings of the period or later personal reflections on it. Some Korean church leaders published important works of theology during or immediately following the 1970s. Others wrote memoirs or biographies in the decades since. This intellectual and biographical material provides important data for this project as well. Collections of worship materials from the period including liturgies, sermons, prayers and hymns offer another important source of ethnohistorical data for understanding the intercultural influences within the Korean and Canadian churches and on the mission field. Such material is

⁴⁸ Ruth Sanz Sabido, *Memories of the Spanish Civil War: Conflict and Community in Rural Spain* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

to be found in the personal libraries of some surviving church leaders, in congregational libraries and in seminary collections.

Parameters

Such a study and approach need not have limited itself to missionary activity and Christian migration between Korea and Canada let alone the specific relationship between the UCC and the PROK. This dissertation's parameters, however, make possible a detailed account of events specific to Canada's largest Protestant denomination and a significant overseas mission partner. The UCC played a dominant role both in Canada's Missionary Enterprise and in the shaping of a Canadian Protestant nationalism. Its mission to Korea was neither its oldest nor its biggest, but it was particularly dynamic and offers compelling examples of indigenous church agency in relationship to Canadian missionaries and mission policy. Unlike the China Mission, for example, which was brought to an abrupt halt following the Communist takeover and the outbreak of the Korean War, the UCC Korea Mission was able to wind down gradually and left time for missionaries and Korean Christians to work through the ambivalent legacy of the Missionary Enterprise together. The period under study excludes critical years immediately following the Pacific and Korean Wars, which involved important developments for both the Korean and Canadian churches. Important developments for both churches and for their relationship with one another occurred after 1988 also. The beginning of the Canadian mission in Korea and the period of 1960 to 1988, however, are moments of especially vigorous dialogue and exchange. The beginning of the Canadian mission provides a picture of fundamental dynamics that would shape the relationship going forward. The 1960s through to the 1980s was

the moment when the scaling down of the mission and the beginning of Korean immigration into the Canadian church saw a fundamental shift in the contact zone.

Translation of Korean

The work that follows does not use a single system for translating Korean person names into English. Rather, it uses the translation that was common when the person in question first became known to an English speaking audience, using the spelling by which English speakers would have come to know of them or which they would have used themselves when signing off of English documents. In the case of Sang Chul Lee, even the order of his name is reversed to correspond with the name by which he was known to in English Canada. Where a person was not previously known to an English audience this dissertation employs the Revised Romanization of Korean (RR) system adopted by the South Korean Ministry of Culture in 2000 for transcribing sounds. The same is true where transliteration of Korean material is concerned. As Sebastian Kim and Kirsteen Kim point out, the alternative McCune-Reischauer system is more commonly used in academic scholarship, but is less accessible to those who are not familiar with the Korean language. The new system is frequently employed by new scholars. It is more accessible to those unfamiliar with the Korean language and therefore more appropriate to a study which is focused on the Canadian church and context. It is also more common on the internet since it is not easy to enter diacritical marks such as those used in the McCune-Reischauer system into search engines.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, eds., *A History of Korean Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 6.

CHAPTER 1

Reflections in Dragon's Well: **Canadian Protestant Nationalism and the Kando Mission Station, 1898 to 1942**

Self-portrait

Skirting the foot of a mountain on the edge of a field to find a lone well I go on my own and quietly bow to peer in.

The moon is bright in the water and the clouds drift by while heaven opens and a fresh wind blows it is autumn.

And a young man is there.
Somehow I resent him and turn to leave.

Turning I think and begin to pity that young man.
I return and bow to look in and the young man is still there.

Again I begin to resent that young man and leave.
Turning to go I think I begin to miss that young man.

In the well the moon is bright and the clouds drift by while heaven opens and a fresh wind blows it is autumn and like a cherished memory that young man is there.¹

September 1939
Yun Dong-ju

¹ Yun Dongju, *Haneulgwa Baramgwa Byeolgwa Ssi* (Seoul: Mareubuk Geombani, 2017), 20.

Translation by the author. Original text below:

자화상

산모퉁이를 돌아 논가 외딴 우물을 홀로 찾아가선 가만히 들여다봅니다.
우물 속에는 달이 밝고 구름이 흐르고 하늘이 펼치고 파아란 바람이 불고 가을이 있습니다.

그리고 한 사나이가 있습니다. 어쩐지 그 사나이가 미워져 돌아갑니다.
돌아가다 생각하니 그 사나이가 가엾어집니다. 도로 가 들여다보니 사나이는 그대로 있습니다.

다시 그 사나이가 미워져 돌아갑니다. 돌아가다 생각하니 그 사나이가 그리워집니다.

우물 속에는 달이 밝고 구름이 흐르고 하늘이 펼치고 파아란 바람이 불고 가을이 있고 추억처럼 사나이가 있습니다.

Introduction

The poem “Self-Portrait” by Korean resistance poet Yun Dong-ju is a lament for the Korean nation. Though coloured with resentment for the powerlessness of Korea in the face of Japanese occupation, the poem is nonetheless forgivingly framed against the clear heavens and hopefully inspired by a fresh autumn wind that breathes new hope into the dream of a Korea that is once again free. Yun’s poetry is acclaimed as an outstanding example of Korean resistance poetry coming out of the period of Japanese colonialism. His fame also contributes to the reputation of the Kando region of Manchuria, a name which means “land in between.” Indeed, Kando found itself caught between multiple regional forces and in the vortex of many nationalist struggles out of which emerged a number of important leaders of Korea’s independence movements in both the pre- and post-war periods. Among these leaders with whom Yun shares his birthplace are classmates who attended the same United Church of Canada (UCC) Korea Mission school. They include future Democracy Movement activists, church leaders and intellectuals, Ahn Byeong Mu, Moon Ik Hwan and Moon Dong Hwan. Even a UCC moderator, Sang Chul Lee, counted himself among the school alumni.

Yun was born and raised in the “In between Place,” the Kando² region of Manchuria, an area that in the early 20th century fell in between Japanese, Chinese, Russian, British and Korean spheres of influence. There he attended Eun-jin Boys Middle School, founded by Canadian missionaries in 1912 and run with their support until 1942.³ The school was located adjacent to

² 間島, the ideograms for Kando literally mean “in between island.” Canadian missionaries referred to it as the In Between Place. Its current manifestation is the Jiandao Autonomous region otherwise known as the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, in present day Jilin province on the Chinese side of the border with North Korea.

³ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang Anaeseo: Hankuk – Kanadakyohoe Seonkyohyeopnyeok 100junyeon Kinyeommunjip* (Seoul: Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe Chulpan, 1998), 30.

the Canadian Mission compound on a hill in the city of Yongjeong, “Dragon’s Well.”⁴ It is likely that the hill and the well of Yongjeong were in Yun’s mind when he composed “Self-portrait.” Though the poem is constructed as a comment on the state of his country, the close association of Yun’s life with the Canadian mission in Yongjeong allows it to serve as an apt metaphor for the Canadian Missionary Enterprise in Korean and Manchuria as well. Canadian missionaries, like Yun, were sometimes helpless witnesses to and sometimes active participants in the East Asian history of conquest, revolution and resistance. Their impact left a mixed legacy. Peering into Dragon’s Well, a centre both of Korean Christianity and nationalism, certain features of Canadian religion and politics can be seen reflected on the surface of the mission contact zone in that place.

Canadian missionaries arrived on the Korean mission field in 1898 as representatives of the Presbyterian church in Canada’s Maritimes region. With Church Union in 1925 the mission came under the banner of the UCC. The agenda of the Church Union movement in Canada was part and parcel of a Canadian Protestant nationalist vision. This was a vision that held British culture and religion to be a source of enlightenment to be emulated by others and Christianity to be a source of political unification and influence. The Korean version of Protestant nationalism, however, was different from the Canadian version. The differences were especially pronounced in Manchuria, a region contested by Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and British interests in which Koreans had more freedom to explore notions of political sovereignty than those in the Japanese-annexed Korea proper. These differences and the context in which they were lived out help us to view Canadian

⁴ 용정 (龍井) - 龍井. Present day Longjing (龙井市); in Jilin Province, China. Various inscribed as Lungchingtun, Ryong Jung, or Yung Jong by Canadian missionaries.

Protestant nationalism in sharp relief. The nationalist commitments of the Canadian missionaries included support for stable government and the unification of Protestant denominations across the world into a strong civilizing force for global peace and stability, but the implications of these commitments were clearly at odds with the aspirations of their Korean colleagues with whom they worked and with whom they often empathized.

Just as Protestants in Canada rallied around a national dream that clearly privileged British identity,⁵ the missionaries they sent abroad espoused a vision of Christian internationalism, a modern manifestation of an agenda for a new kind of Christendom in which it was imagined the political and social power of millions of Christians would overcome national and ethnic divisions worldwide.⁶ Though the racial and ethnocentric implications of this vision seem to have been largely invisible to Canadian missionaries, they were implicitly challenged by Korean Christian commitments and actions. Indeed, as Canadian missionaries began more and more to identify with the Koreans desire for independence from Japan, the inconsistencies between their own religio-nationalism and that of their Korean colleagues became more and more obvious. Relationships between the Canadian missionaries and Korean Christians in Kando carried over into the post-war period. The tensions evident at the beginning of their association provide important historical context within which to understand the dynamics of that relationship in the postcolonial period.

⁵ Phyllis Arihart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 12; Brian Clarke, "English Speaking Canada from 1854," *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin eds. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 357; Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, "The United Church of Canada: A Church Fittingly National," In *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 204.

⁶ Robert A. Wright, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 4, 9, 107, 118, 123.

Dragon's Well: The Manchurian Contact Zone

Canadian missionaries first began to arrive in Korea between 1888 and 1892 under the auspices of ecumenical organizations or American churches.⁷ These first Canadian missionaries travelled separately and worked independently of one another in locations scattered across the peninsula. In 1893 a self-supported missionary from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, named William McKenzie traveled to Korea and settled in a village in the northern part of the peninsula named Sorae. McKenzie made such an impression on the people there that when he died suddenly in 1895 of a self-inflicted gunshot wound suffered in a delirium brought on by typhoid fever, the community wrote a letter to the Presbyterian church in the Maritimes (McKenzie's home church) asking that more missionaries be sent to them.⁸ In 1897, after a dramatic series of events⁹ the Eastern (Maritime) Division of Mission of the Presbyterian church finally responded by dispatching five Canadians, two couples and a single male, the official beginning of the Canadian church-sponsored mission to Korea. This was followed by ten more sent by the Western (Ontario and Quebec) Division of the Canadian Presbyterian Church in 1910.

When they arrived in Korea, the Canadians had to confer with the mission boards from other nations and denominations that had preceded them in Korea. At question was the area in which they might undertake their mission activities. Concerned to avoid wasteful competition and conflict, missionaries in Korea had decided to divide the mission fields into separate areas,

⁷ Young-sik Yoo, "The Impact of Canadian Missionaries in Korea: A Historical Survey of Early Canadian Mission Work, 1888-1898," PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1996, 137ff.

⁸ Lak-Geon George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910*, 4th Edition (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1987), 51; Yoo, "The Impact of Canadian Missionaries in Korea," 422.

⁹ The letter from the Koreans in Sorae was deliberately hidden by Canadian Presbyterian church officials anxious about taking on new mission expenses and then uncovered by an enthusiastic group of young adults connected to the Student Volunteer Movement.

assigning each area according to country of origin and religious affiliation.¹⁰ After some deliberation, the Americans and Australians of Methodist and Presbyterian alignment, who were already active in much of the country, volunteered to withdraw from either the southeast or the northeast of the peninsula so that the Canadians could have a region of their own to focus on.ⁱ The story is told by Koreans who worked with the Canadian missionaries that the northeastern region of the country was the coldest and least hospitable part of the peninsula and that the Canadians were the only ones willing to work there.¹¹ Missionary William Scott, however, recorded that the Canadians chose the northeastern provinces of North and South Hamkyeong for their mission field, in part at least, because it was not far from where their forerunner, McKenzie, had worked and died.¹²

The area of Korea for which the Canadian missionaries came to have exclusive responsibility was a huge and sparsely populated region extending 800 kilometres north from Wonsan (a city about midway between northern and southern extremities of the the eastern coast of the Korean peninsula) to Hoiryeong and Kimchaek in the northeast corner of the country bordering Russia and China. From the east coast of the peninsula it extended approximately 80 kilometers inland.¹³ The Canadians quickly realized that they had landed in an area of the country that was historically, culturally and geographically distinct from the rest of Korea. The northeast was a particularly mountainous region with a long history of rule by Manchurian-Koreans or Manchurians based north of the Tumen and Yalu rivers. The inhabitants of the northeastern provinces continued to look north, rather than south, for support in times of trouble

¹⁰ Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 379.

¹¹ Interview with Kim Ikseon, 6 July 2019.

¹² William Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea, 1898-1970s*, revised and expanded by J. Greig McMullin (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2009), 275.

¹³ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 277.

and were always on the margins of the Korean political economy whose metropole was Seoul.¹⁴ As the Canadian missionaries became familiar with their surroundings, they realized that there were also many Koreans across the border in Siberia and Manchuria. A good number were already Christian and welcomed missionary support. The Canadians were stretched thin with one of the smallest mission contingents on the largest mission field. Nevertheless, in 1903, an exploratory expedition visited Kando and the region surrounding Vladivostok.¹⁵ As they moved north they met thousands of Koreans who had been forced from their homes in the northeastern Korean provinces by Japanese encroachments.¹⁶ Numbers crossing the northern border continued to surge in the ensuing years.¹⁷ As a result, the Canadian Mission decided to establish one of its first three stations in Yongjeong,¹⁸ about 80 kilometres on the other side of the Tumen river, the northern limit of Korea proper.¹⁹ The other two mission stations were in Hoiryeong, on the Korean side of the Tumen River bordering Manchuria, and Hamheung, further south along the coast. These initial three stations were later joined by two more in Kimchaek (Seongjin) and Wonsan.ⁱⁱ ²⁰ But Yongjeong captured the Canadians' imagination as an important centre of their Korea mission.²¹ Pressing for the construction of a mission compound there the very next year, missionary T.D. Mansfield wrote in 1912, "In all our territory we have no work so insistent, so promising, so white to the harvest, as this Yong Jung (sic) field."²²

¹⁴ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 277.

¹⁵ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 407.

¹⁶ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 409.

¹⁷ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 419.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 527.

²⁰ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 432.

²¹ T.D. Mansfield to A.E. Armstrong, 28 July 1911, file 5, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

²² T.D. Mansfield to A.E. Armstrong, 28 November 1912, file 9, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

Kando was a place where groups representing various political interests, colonial agendas and anti-colonial convictions converged. Korean and Canadian eyewitness accounts paint a picture of a remarkably complex and multifaceted contact zone, the point of confluence of numerous distinct cultures, which strongly featured three Asian nations (China, Korea and Japan) and three colonial powers (Japan, Russia and Britain) occupying a range of imbricated social positions. Outside of the direct control of the Japanese empire until 1932,²³ Kando offered more freedom of expression for Koreans than Korea proper. Sang Chul Lee, a one-time resident of Yongjeong, a major city in the Kando region, paints a compelling picture:

With so many schools, Yongjeong provided a lively intellectual atmosphere. It was also a place where every conceivable stream of Korean political thought intersected. I found my mind pushed and pulled, tossed and turned, in many directions at the same time. The leadership of many movements passed through this town at one time or another, often in secrecy because of Japanese surveillance. The town was a spawning ground for political, social and religious leaders who became prominent in both North and South Korea following the Second World War.²⁴

The place also brought Lee into contact with non-Asian foreigners. There was a British consulate in Yongjeong. Foreign missionaries, Protestant and Catholic, serving Korean and Chinese populations were in evidence throughout the region. Some of these were Canadian missionaries, such as the principal who ran Eun-jin Middle School where Lee attended. Canadian missionaries also ran a girls' school, a hospital, a nurses training school and a Bible school for training church volunteers. These all clustered around a mission compound with three missionary houses.²⁵

²³ Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004); Duara argues that even after the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo, Japanese influence in the region was more ambiguous than it was in Japan's colonies.

²⁴ Sang-Chul Lee and Eric Weingartner, *The Wanderer: The Autobiography of a United Church Moderator* (Winfield, BC: Woodlake Books, 1989), 34.

²⁵ Lee, *The Wanderer*, 35; Interview with Kim Ikseon, 6 July 2019; Interview with Chun Sunyeong, 13 July 2019.

The city of Yongjeong was, by the turn of the century, a hub of the rapidly growing Korean population in Manchuria.²⁶ As the town grew, the mission compound, which had been constructed on the outskirts of town, was quickly engulfed by the growing city and ended in occupying a place at its heart.²⁷ The Canadian missionaries were not the only missionary or religious influence in the area. The Chinese living in Kando were under care of Scotch Irish Presbyterians who maintained contact with them from their centre of activity in Harbin. Methodists working with Koreans had withdrawn from the region to make room for the Canadians, but had left behind a number of churches and schools that remained affiliated with them.²⁸ The Catholic church had a strong and loyal following as well.²⁹ Confucian influences were ubiquitous. Animist traditions were also common as evidenced by the prevalence of stone mounds and carved poles that missionaries called “devil posts.”³⁰

In addition to the mix of religions, Canadian missionaries discovered a remarkable intermingling of cultures. Travelling to the region for the first time in 1921, newly arrived Canadian mission doctor Florence Murray was particularly struck by the multicultural make up of the location: “We met a succession of Russian carts, Chinese carts, Korean bull carts, Pekin carts with high canvas covers, pack ponies and donkeys, and Japanese and Chinese soldiers on horseback.”³¹ During her first night in Manchuria she noticed a loud and boisterous group of

²⁶ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 420.

²⁷ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 442n87.

²⁸ R.H. Hardie to Dr. Grierson, 18 April 1909, file 3, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto; Sang Chul Lee, *Vladivostok-ea-seo Toronto-gga-ji: Yeollin Seagyeareul Gajin Nageunae* (Korea: Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangrohoe Chulpansa, 2010), 33.

²⁹ R.H. Hardie to Dr. Grierson, 18 April 1909, file 3, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto; R. Grierson to R.P. MacKay, 11 January 1910, file 4, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

³⁰ A.H. Barker to A.E. Armstrong, 29 July 1911, file 5, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

Interestingly I came across no reports of Buddhist activity in Kando.

³¹ Florence Murray, *At the Foot of Dragon Hill: The Story of a Surgeon's Two Decades in Manchuria and Korea, and the Challenges She Faced as a Woman Doctor in a Culture So Primitive its Women Were Not Even Considered Worthy of Having Names* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1975), 24.

Japanese, Chinese and Koreans feasting together around a table in the Chinese Inn where they were staying.³² Missionary Earl Nichols was also taken by the mix of cultures represented in the variety of foods and eating styles of the Japanese, Chinese and Koreans who clearly ate together and blended their food cultures.³³ Both Nichols and Murray noted the different kinds of clothing, buildings, social customs and burial styles that existed in close proximity to one another.³⁴

The Canadian missionaries were a part of the vibrant mix of cultures and religions in the Kando region. Aside from the modern education, the medical care and training, and the novel religion that they introduced, Canadians contributed, by their attitudes and mode of life as well as by their actions and words, to the debate about Japanese colonialism and the future of Korea. Canadian missionaries from the very beginning showed genuine sympathy for the political plight of Koreans and a number of them earned a reputation for being brave supporters of and advocates for Koreans' and their expressions of political resistance in the face of Japanese repression.³⁵ Indeed, some missionaries went out of their way to defend Koreans publicly by contradicting Japanese statements and playing up a picture of Korean victimhood for readers back home.³⁶ But they were nonetheless conflicted about the virtues of Japanese colonialism. When it came to matters of governance that did not involve state sponsored political persecution, they tended to prefer the stable and progressive policies of Japanese colonial law and order to the possibility of relative chaos under Korean autonomous rule.

³² Nichols, *Memoir*, 86.

³³ Nichols, *Memoir*, 87.

³⁴ Murray, *At the Foot of Dragon Hill*, 38.

³⁵ Frederick J. Glover, "Friends, Foes and Partners: The Relationship between the Canadian Missionaries and the Korean Christians in North-eastern Korea and Manchuria from 1898 until 1927," *Studies in World Christianity: The Edinburgh Review of Theology and Religion*, Vol. 23:3, 201.

³⁶ A. Hamish Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun: The Canadian Protestant Missionary Movement in the Japanese Empire, 1872-1931* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990), 198.

Murray's and Nichol's memoirs, written for Western consumption, present a telling account of how Canadian missionaries located themselves socially within the Manchurian contact zone.³⁷ As postcolonial theorist Mary Louis Pratt has shown, accounts of western "visitors" to the contact zone construct the colonial metropole, encoding and legitimating the aspirations of empire.³⁸ While expressing a degree of comfort and even familiarity with the population and environment on the mission field, the Murray and Nichol memoirs simultaneously present their position as aloof from their Asian neighbours. Murray, noted for the North American audience of her memoirs the "unknown smells" and "noisy eating and belching" not to mention the inconveniences of travel that marked Manchuria as a "primitive" place.³⁹ Nichols travelled to Manchuria with an orchestra made up of both missionaries and Koreans. In this there was a degree of collegiality across ethnic lines, but missionaries did not share the same lodgings with their Korean orchestra mates. These accounts of the Manchurian context from the Missionary perspective predictably locate westerners and the Canadian church in an elevated position vis à vis the Asians to whom the missionaries had been sent to spread the gospel. These attitudes were further emphasized by the material culture of the missionaries whose houses were particularly grand⁴⁰ and whose compounds invariably featured tennis courts⁴¹ and often automobiles as well.⁴² These things did not go unnoticed by their Korean neighbours.⁴³

³⁷ Murray's memoir was not published until the 1970s, but represents a world view which was typical of official and personal missionary correspondence in the early 1930s.

³⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge Press, 1992), 5.

³⁹ Murray, *At the Foot of Dragon Hill*, 25.

⁴⁰ T.D. Mansfield to A.E. Armstrong, 21 November 1912, file 9, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴¹ Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 109.

⁴² Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men: The Changing Missions of Three Professional Women in Asia and Africa, 1902-69* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 24.

⁴³ Glover, "Friends, Foes and Partners," 206.

Often the missionaries betrayed racial and cultural prejudices in their attitudes towards Koreans and other non-British people they encountered (including the Japanese). But the contact zone in which they found themselves complicated and challenged these biases. The enthusiastic Korean converts to the Christian faith won the hearts of the Canadians who found it impossible to stand idly by when they suffered violence at the hands of the Japanese or Chinese authorities for their peaceful expressions of political dissent. The Canadian missionaries found themselves playing the role of advocates and guardians for their Korean flock despite that fact that on principle they agreed with the need for Japanese governance.⁴⁴

The fact that Canadians were neither ethnically nor politically nor religiously aligned with the colonial power made the Korean mission field different from other Canadian mission fields such as India, China, Trinidad or Angola. This contributed to what Canadian mission historian Ruth Compton Brouwer has called a “striking difference” in the Korean field with “significant advantages and opportunities for missionaries” due to the fact that those they worked with did not see the mission or the religion they espoused as a source of oppression, but rather as a vehicle for liberation.⁴⁵ While missionary converts in other parts of the world were encouraged to abandon their old ways and culture in favour of the customs of the British colonizers, for Koreans who adopted Christianity, the new religion was seen unequivocally as a means to preserve their own culture and assert their own sovereignty as they sought to liberate themselves from a colonial power. Japan had occupied their land in 1905 following the Russo-Japanese war and then annexed it outright in 1910. Unlike the Protestant churches in Canada, which sought to

⁴⁴ Interview with Kim Ikseon, 6 July 2019; Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 516ff; Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang Anaeseo: Hankuk – Kanadakyohoe Seonkyohyeopnyeok 100junyeon Kinyeommunjip* (Seoul: Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe Chulpan, 1998), 32; Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 172.

⁴⁵ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men: The Changing Missions of Three Professional Women in Asia and Africa, 1902-69* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 7.

build a new nation with the support of British imperial interests and modelled on British imperial culture, the Korean Protestants, as Christians, sought to defend their ancient nation and culture against the machinations of Empire.⁴⁶ The anti-Japanese sentiment was particularly strong in Manchuria and northeastern Korea which had a long tradition of harboring political exiles.

The Qing government in China tried to impede the movement of Koreans immigrating north for economic or political reasons and placed restrictions on the ability of Koreans to own land in Chinese territory.⁴⁷ Though these policies proved a hindrance, Koreans continued to move in, convinced that they were simply reclaiming land that had been the home of their ancestors from time immemorial.⁴⁸ As Japan tightened its grip on Korea proper, Manchuria became a haven for the Korean *Euibyeong*⁴⁹ and others who had been marked as political opponents to the new colonial government. Interviewee Chun Sun-yeong tells of growing up in Kando having migrated with her family in the early 1900s. Her grandfather had been arrested and executed for military actions against the Japanese occupation, staining her family's reputation and fixing their names to a black list with the Japanese authorities.⁵⁰ From the 1920s through to the 1940s, however, the North Kando region became another contested sphere of expanding Japanese imperialism. Rather than refugees, Koreans (as nominal citizens of the Japan) were encouraged by the Japanese government to emigrate to Manchuria through a

⁴⁶ Yoo, "The Impact of Canadian Missionaries in Korea," 287.

⁴⁷ Ian Nish, *The History of Manchuria 1840-1948: A Sino-Russo-Japanese Triangle*, Volume 1 (Kent, UK: Renaissance Books, 2016), 89.

⁴⁸ Historically, societies culturally and historically connected to the modern day Koreas have occupied and ruled large areas extending north of the current North Korean border into Manchuria and Siberia. Sections of Kim and Moon's memoir speak to the tradition, which remains alive in Korea to this day of claims to land north of the Tumen and Yalu Rivers: Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006), 29, 30, 375.

⁴⁹ 義兵 – 의병, literally "righteous army," a term which was coined during the Japanese invasions of 1592 to identify bands of Korean freedom fighters operating independently of the national army.

⁵⁰ Interview with Chun Sunyeong, 13 July 2019.

colonial policy bent on consolidating expansionist objectives and projecting power for the Empire.⁵¹ With the Korean border to the south and the Jilin province to the north, the prefecture of Kando was home to just under half a million Koreans by the 1920s.⁵² In the decade between the early 1920s and early 1930s, the population of Koreans in Kando and other areas of Manchuria more than doubled.⁵³

The Water in the Well: Korean Protestant Nationalism in Kando

Korean nationalism flowed out of Korea and spilled into the Kando region like water from a broken dam, pooling in its communities and creating focal points for organization and action. On the eve of the 20th century, the families of Kim Shin Mook and Moon Chai Rin crossed the Tumen River into Manchuria from northeastern Korea.⁵⁴ Kim remembers, “These people [of my village] were worried about the situation of Korea that worsened by the day, heading off for Manchuria embracing the great purpose of raising a new generation to be workers for the nation.”⁵⁵ Recorded in *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin - Kim Shin Mook Gohoirok*, the published memories of this couple constitute a unique eyewitness account of the beginnings of the Korean migration to Kando.⁵⁶ This memoir was conceived by Moon in the 1980s⁵⁷ and with his children’s and grandchildren’s support was completed in 2006 in a volume that included

⁵¹ Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 43, 51.

⁵² Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed*, 45; Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History*, (New York: The Modern Library, 2010), 50.

⁵³ Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945 – 1950*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 18.

⁵⁴ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*.

⁵⁵ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 374-375.

⁵⁶ Kyeongjae Kim, “Kajoksaeui jipyeongneul neomeo” in *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006), 627ff.

⁵⁷ Letter from Moon Chai Rin to Lois Wilson re book “Christianity and Korean Nationalism in Manchuria” dated 19 December 1980, File #8, Box #1, Accession #94.170C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

his wife's contribution as well.⁵⁸ From the beginning, Moon's reflections were specifically focussed on the Korean independence movement and nationalism, interests which remained close to his heart until his death in January 1986.⁵⁹ Kim shared her spouse's political commitments and was even more involved in the independence movement in Manchuria since, in contrast to Moon who was often away studying or travelling abroad, she was never absent from the terrain of nationalist struggle. As prominent leaders in the Korean church, the focus of their memoir speaks to the central place of nationalist concerns in the Christian community.

Arriving as children in 1899, both Kim and Moon remembered their families' sense of amazement as they laid eyes on the fertile expanse of Manchurian land. Together they had immigrated with a whole village from North Hamkyeong Province.⁶⁰ This was not an uncommon phenomenon as people tended to immigrate in communities rather than as individuals or as individual families.⁶¹ The village had left its old location near Hoiryeong on the northern Korean boundary line and transplanted itself across the border. Their leaders were reform-minded Confucian scholars disillusioned with the Yi dynasty. They had encouraged the migration preaching a three-fold purpose:

1. To reclaim the land of their ancestors.
2. To construct an ideal, more just village.
3. To find a place where they could educate themselves as a vital step towards restoring their deteriorating nation.⁶²

⁵⁸ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*.

⁵⁹ Letter of Faye Moon to Ed, dated 23 January 1986, file# 001682, box #48, U of T Special Collection on Democratization and Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

⁶⁰ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 29, 374.

⁶¹ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 419.

⁶² Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 33.

The above is Moon's memory. Kim has a slightly different memory of the three points the Shilhak leaders emphasized to encourage the community to move to Manchuria: Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 375.

The leaders of the community were scholars of the Shilhak School.⁶³ As such they were committed followers of a line of Confucianism inspired by Mencius,⁶⁴ but open to new ideas from other cultural sources as well. They had participated in the Tonghak Movement,⁶⁵ an uprising of Korean peasants inspired by a hybrid indigenous Korean religion that drew on Catholic Christian teachings as well as traditional Korean religion and philosophy. This Korean nationalist movement precipitated the Sino-Japanese confrontation of 1895 and was subsequently wiped out by the Japanese forces whose presence on the peninsula the movement strenuously opposed.

The Shilhak scholars who led Kim and Moon's village were shaped by their experience in the Tonghak Movement and as a result had a different approach than the typical Korean scholar. Confucian teachers, for example, generally claimed a high social status, wore white clothes and shunned manual labour. Shilhak scholars, by contrast, identified with the common people, wore black and were not above putting their shoulder to the plow. Moon and Kim both recall how Shilhak leaders would return home late from a long day threshing crops or covered in mud from a day of work in the fields.⁶⁶ Though they engaged in hard manual work, education was the great passion of the Shilhak scholars of Kim and Moon's community, particularly education with a view to restoring the Korean nation. When they moved to Manchuria, each brought enough books to fill their own personal studies.⁶⁷ Upon settling in their new location, they immediately proceeded to open *seodang*,⁶⁸ Confucian schools where boys beginning at the age of 7 learned

⁶³ 實學- 실학, literally "practical learning" and often translated as the Realist School of Confucianism

⁶⁴ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 32.

⁶⁵ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 380. 東學 - 동학 or "Eastern Learning"

⁶⁶ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 54, 380.

⁶⁷ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 41.

⁶⁸ 書堂 - 서당 literally "book place" sometimes translated as a "village school"

the Chinese written characters and began to read the classics.⁶⁹ Kim Yakyeon was the most famous and well respected of the Shilhak leaders in Moon and Kim's community and his school and teachings gained a reputation in Manchuria and Korea even among the Chinese and Japanese.

The reputation of the Shilhak leaders of Kim and Moon's community attracted other teachers passionate about restoring Korean independence. These new arrivals who were fleeing Japanese persecution nevertheless brought with them a modern approach to education learned in Japanese- and mission-run schools in the south. Demonstrating once again their practical approach and cultural flexibility, the Shilhak leaders made way for the new ideas. They closed their *seodang* in favour of combining the students from various communities into a new and bigger elementary school with a modernized curriculum. On 27 April 1908, the new school was opened in Kim and Moon's village and students began to attend classes led by exiled patriots. The school was named Myeongdong,⁷⁰ "Light of the East," a reference to the restoration of Korea. Before long, it gained a reputation in the area such that the village became known by that name as well.⁷¹ The new school for boys was soon twinned with a school for girls.⁷²

The next year the community sought to hire a permanent principal for the school. They approached a man named Jeong Byeongtae.⁷³ Jeong was willing to come to Myeongdong, but he was a Christian and his religion was an unnegotiable pillar of his educational philosophy. He told the Shilhak leaders he would come only if they allowed him to include worship in the

⁶⁹ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 41.

⁷⁰ 明東 – 명동

⁷¹ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 402ff. (This is the village into which the poet Yun Dongju was born.)

⁷² Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 410.

⁷³ Jeong was the father of David Chong, second minister of TKUC and later professor of Eastern Religions at Carlton University.

curriculum of the school. After some discussion they agreed. Upon his arrival in 1909, Moon reports, “all the students became Christian.”⁷⁴ A year later, Jeong threatened to quit if the adults didn’t join the students in church. Moon surmises that what was at stake for Jeong was not a zeal for the salvation of individual souls through the new Western religion, but a program of national salvation. Jeong was convinced that church and school together were an essential combination. It was not enough to merely educate children. It was important that the adults be involved in the transformation of their communities as well. Multigenerational education and conversion were essential to the mobilization of the community in the movement to save Korea. The goal was ultimately the restoration of a sovereign Korea and Jeong saw a multigenerational Christian population as essential to achieving this objective.⁷⁵

The close connection between Christianity and nationalism was not unique to Koreans in Manchuria. However, one important result of its advent in the Kando region had a major influence on this association. In 1873, John Ross and John MacIntyre, missionaries from the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, had set up base in Kando and made the acquaintance of a Korean merchant named Seo Sangyun.⁷⁶ Seo undertook to teach them the Korean language and, in collaboration with another Korean, Yi Ungchan, Ross compiled the first Korean-English dictionary and translated the New Testament into Korean.⁷⁷ Ross and MacIntyre subsequently retired from the Korean field, but Seo Sangyun took printed copies of the translated New Testament and began to distribute them throughout the border region. Soon the faith was

⁷⁴ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom*, 44.

⁷⁵ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom*, 45.

⁷⁶ Seo Sangyun’s brother, Seo Sangun, who was with him when he first met Ross, later moved to Sorae in northern Korea and was the one who, following William McKenzie’s sudden death, wrote the letter to the Presbyterian church in the Maritimes asking that Canadian missionaries be sent to Korea.

⁷⁷ Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 51; Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876 – 1915* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2013), 50; Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 128.

spreading simply on the strength of these printed materials. By 1884, hundreds of Korean-speaking Christians could be found along the Manchurian border in places never visited by a missionary.⁷⁸

The linguistic medium through which the religious message was communicated was as significant as the message itself for the spread of Christianity among Koreans. Ross and Yi had translated the Bible into the common phonetic Korean script, *hangeul*.⁷⁹ This was a script that had been developed centuries earlier by the fourth king of the Yi Dynasty. But court nobles at the time frowned on the use of a native Korean writing form that was accessible to the masses, preferring the complex ideograms, which were the medium for elite East Asian literati. The *hangeul* script, nevertheless, was kept alive and used among the common people. As early as 1592, its use to rally the population against a Japanese invasion contributed to the beginnings of modern national consciousness.⁸⁰ It was into the common *hangeul*, rather than the ancient East Asian ideograms of the educated Confucian nobility, that the Christian Bible was translated for the first Korean Protestants.⁸¹

The average Korean took political inspiration simply from the fact that their common language was being used. “As long as the Bible was read in the Korean national language of the vernacular script,” relates Korean church historian Suh Kwang-sun, “it was extremely difficult for the rulers and the missionaries to control the national and political consciousness of the

⁷⁸ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 129.

⁷⁹ 한글

⁸⁰ Jahyun Kim Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

⁸¹ Kim Yong-bok, “Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People,” *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed., (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 84. Catholic Christianity had come to Korea a century earlier through the conversion in Beijing of a noble class Korean. He had brought with him a Christian New Testament translated into the East Asian ideograms, which could only be read by the most educated of Korean society.

Christians in Korea.”⁸² Christianity retained its symbolic connection to Korean language, and therefore nationalist aspirations, late into the colonial period as Christian worship services were one of the last places where Japanese authorities permitted Korean to be spoken publicly.

Minjung theologian Kim Yong Bok sums up the significance of the use of the *hangeul* in the translation of the Bible this way:

[B]esides the general significance of the rehabilitation of the Korean script, the main significance of the translation of the Bible was the fact that it created a major language-event, introducing a messianic language to the common people of Korea, who were oppressed and exploited, and were suffering under social chaos and foreign threat. This translation of the Bible into the Korean vernacular became one of the most significant events in modern history, which went beyond its religious significance for the Christian church.⁸³

According to Kim, the translation of the Bible into *hangeul* gave the Korean population a vocabulary that transcended class divisions and gave voice to their religio-political aspirations.⁸⁴ The compelling nature of that translation is witnessed by the fact that many were converted simply upon receiving the printed text without having seen a missionary.⁸⁵

These affinities between the new Protestant Christian religion and Korean nationalism notwithstanding, the transition to Christianity from a basically Confucian position was not easy for everybody in Kim Shin Mook and Moon Chai Rin’s village. The decision to bring Jeong had required some careful discernment of religio-political loyalties. Above all the community was committed to the nationalism inspired in the new Christian religion. The Shilhak leadership also

⁸² Suh Kwang-sun David, “A Biographical Sketch of an Asian Consultation,” *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, eds. Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 21-22.

⁸³ Kim, “Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People,” 84.

⁸⁴ Kim, “Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People,” 80.

⁸⁵ Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 53-4.

resonated with many Christian ethical values, including the ideal that educated religious leaders should not regard themselves above manual labour.⁸⁶ However, Christianity also demanded the rejection of cherished traditions. One of the most difficult to let go of was the practice of *jesa*,⁸⁷ a ritual honouring the ancestors and demonstrating filial piety, central pillars of Confucian ethics and practice. This was a rite central to the community⁸⁸ and many found the Christian proscription of it troubling.

In addition to the fact that it was a cherished tradition that embodied values that the communities continued to espouse, the *jesa* ritual has deep political undertones. In 1645, a papal interdiction against this rite, over the objection of Jesuit missionaries such as Mateo Ricci, led to the suppression of Catholicism in China in the 17th century and the martyrdom of thousands of Korea's first Catholic converts in the late 18th and mid 19th centuries.⁸⁹ At the time, the Korean court interpreted the rejection of *jesa* by Korea's first Catholics as an attack on the foundations of the kingdom itself. These considerations likely also gave the Shilhak scholars of Myeongdong village pause and explains the conflict they felt regarding Jeong's demands as principal of the school that the community convert to Christianity. Eventually, however, all but one family in the village converted. But Kim Yakyeon, the principal Shilhak leader, did not entirely give up the Confucian custom. He continued to perform the *jesa* rite, not on the birth and death anniversaries of his deceased parents as in the past, but on Christmas and Good Friday, thus combining Christian and Confucian traditions.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 368.

⁸⁷ 祭祀 - 제사

⁸⁸ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 393.

⁸⁹ Don Baker, "Unexpected Fruit: Catholicism and the Rise of Civil Society in Korea" Paper for a Colloquium on Christianity in Korea (The Hahan Moo-sook Colloquium in the Korean Humanities), October 21, 2000, George Washington University [Preliminary version]; Donald N. Clark, "Christianity in Modern Korea" *About Asia*, Volume 11, No. 2, Fall 2006, 35.

⁹⁰ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom*, 426.

Successive exploratory and itinerating trips by Canadian missionaries into Manchuria and Siberia starting in 1903⁹¹ raised the awareness of Korean Christians to the presence of missionaries working in the area and of their potential benefit to the community. Kim Yakyeon put his name on a petition with others on 4 November 1912 to beseech Canadian missionaries to come and set up a station near their village.⁹² Kim remained closely associated with missionaries from this time on as the interviewees Chun Sunyeong and Kim Ikseon attest.⁹³ Photographs from the period present Kim Yakyeon as an important person in the Christian community and Missionary circles. (See photo in appendix)ⁱⁱⁱ

The earliest expressions of Korean Christianity involved a message of social transformation and communal salvation connected to the political aspirations of Korean independence. In Myeongdong, the Shilhak leaders' call for national restoration had been fully incorporated into the Christian gospel preached at church. This was not a religion of apolitical, personal salvation such as that preached by many Western missionaries, Canadians included, and later adopted by large numbers of South Korean Christians in the post-war period.⁹⁴ Rather it was a message of communal redemption, meaning the call to liberate the community (and nation) as a whole to a better place.⁹⁵ The Christian message, therefore, entailed political struggle. During the years of military dictatorship between 1962 and 1987, when anti-communist ideology reached its apex and a conservative theology was used to pacify Korean

⁹¹ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 407; R.H. Hardie to Dr. Grierson, 18 April 1909, file 3, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto; W.R. Foote to R.P. McKay, 11 August 1910, file 4, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁹² Petition of Yongjeong Christians date 4 November 1912, file 8, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁹³ Interview with Chun Sunyeong, 13 July 2019; Interview with Kim Ikseon, 6 July 2019.

⁹⁴ Timothy S. Lee, *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 34.

⁹⁵ Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed., *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 18.

Christians, a contrarian understanding of the faith with roots in the Kando region of Manchuria continued to be an important religio-political force in South Korea in opposition to the dictatorship.

The political and cultural environment of Kando and northeastern Korea worked to shape the Korean spirit of political independence and Korean Christianity. The Christianity that developed here can be linked to the unique features of the contact zone in which it found itself. East Asian historian Prasenjit Duara neatly described the contradictory features of the Manchurian region following its reinventions as a puppet state of Japan: “Manchukuo appears as a place of paradoxes, where it becomes difficult to disentangle imperialism from nationalism, modernity from tradition, frontier from heartland, and ideals of transcendence from ideologies of boundedness.”⁹⁶ For Duara, these contradictions are symptomatic of modernity everywhere in the 20th century and this helps to explain why the Korean Christian experience in Kando produced a particularly relevant expression of Christianity for the postcolonial context.

The unique tensions and contradictions of the region are clearly evident in the expression of Christianity developed by Yongjeong Christians. Their approach identified the Christian message of salvation with a cultural collective (Koreans), but not with the political institutions who claimed to represent the nation. As such their collective boundaries were ambiguous and defied strict definitions imposed by those in power. Accordingly, Christianity for them was able to bridge a number of social divisions such as those between noble and peasant or between communists and capitalists. Yongjeong native and founder of Minjung theology Ahn Byung Mu (discussed in chapter 4) maintained that the Korean version of Christian nationalism was diametrically opposed to the German nationalism of Hitler’s time. Korean Christian nationalism

⁹⁶ Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 1.

was about solidarity with those who were marginalized and exploited in the name of the nation-state, he said, whereas German nationalism aligned with the state to oppress minorities.⁹⁷ Ahn highlighted the need for people of different nationalities and different religions to work together.⁹⁸ The nationalist/post-nationalist tension in his understanding of the “oppressed” reflects the cultural, national, social and religious realities, which were a prominent feature of Manchuria.

Gazing Down the Well: A Reflection of Canadian Protestant Nationalism

As if to their own reflection, Canadian missionaries were drawn to the vast fertile plains and frigid winter temperatures, that they found in Kando, not to mention the signs of a burgeoning modern nation-state ripe for the civilizing work of Christian mission. Manchuria, according to environmental historian Diana Lary, shared “almost parallel patterns of development” with the western prairies in addition to a similar climate, topography, flora and fauna and resource potential.⁹⁹ This was not lost on the Canadian missionaries who lived and worked there at the turn of the 20th century. Kando, the area into which a large number of Koreans had migrated in the early 1900s, was “surrounded by a splendid farming country” and, with railroad construction underway, it reminded missionary A.H. Barker in 1911 “most forcibly” of the prairies.¹⁰⁰ A year later J.M. Scott, reported back to the Canadian church that the

⁹⁷ Accession# 83.019C, Box#23 of 24, File# 7, Letter from Willa dated 16 May 1978 including translation from German of Ahn Byeong Mu’s original thoughts regarding Minjung theology

⁹⁸ Willa Kernan letter, 16 May 1978, (including translation from German of Ahn Byeong Mu’s original thoughts regarding Minjung theology), file 7, box 23 of 24, accession 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁹⁹ Diana Lary, “Manchuria: History and Environment,” in *Empire and Environment in the Making of Manchuria*, ed. Norman Smith (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 28.

¹⁰⁰ A.H. Barker to A.E. Armstrong, 29 July 1911, file 5, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

Kando region “relates itself to Korea as Alberta and Saskatchewan have done to older Canada.”¹⁰¹ Pioneer Canadian missionary Robert Grierson summed it up most eloquently:

But Kando does not depend for it's [sic] future upon a problematical Railway. It is the Mecca of the Korean emigrant. Already there are several hundreds of thousands of Koreans over there, and they are ever moving in; not being checked even by the terrible arctic weather that prevails there now. We met them, with wagon-loads of their stuff making for those fertile plains. It is so appropriate that the Western Committee [of the Presbyterian Church in Canada] has taken up this work for Kando is our [Canadian] North-West all over again, including it's [sic] fertility. Not Mountainous like Korea proper, but like the foot-hill country [of the Canadian prairies], with soil black with loam. A goodly heritage for the coming settler, and the coming Missionary.¹⁰²

In relating his experience of itinerating beyond the Tumen river, Grierson drew a strong parallel between the Canadian northwest and Manchuria. With twelve years as a missionary to Korea already under his belt, Grierson had witnessed the Japanese takeover of the peninsula and the impact of its colonial policies on Koreans. He sympathized with the Korean point of view. In Manchuria he and others could see that the Japanese would be using the railroad to project economic and military power. Be that as it may, Kando also provided missionaries with a good environment to win Koreans over to the Christian religion in a territory that bore a marked resemblance to parts of his North American home, which was at the very same time being colonized and Christianized. It was an environment with which he felt familiar.

The natural, political, economic, cultural and religious environment of Manchuria highlights the dynamics of this mission contact zone and lends itself easily to historical comparisons regarding nationalism and the project of nation-state building at the turn of the 20th century.¹⁰³ It also provides a fascinating context in which to study the role of religion in

¹⁰¹ J.M. Scott to R.P. MacKay, 20 November 1912, file 9, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹⁰² R. Grierson to R.P. MacKay, 11 January 1910, file 4, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹⁰³ Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*; Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Bill Sewell, *Constructing*

emerging modern societies. Protestant Christianity in general, and the mission enterprise specifically, played an important role in the shaping of nationalisms both on the Canadian Prairies and among Koreans in Manchuria although with strikingly dissimilar results.

Pratt's postcolonial theory about contact zones posits that in addition to the impact Europeans had on the societies they encountered abroad, their encounters also shaped Europe. This occurred often through the reports and descriptions Europeans would compose and send back to the metropole.¹⁰⁴ Canadian missionary accounts of Korea, then, were part of an enterprise that was helping to shape Canada. By the 1920s, Canada had more missionaries in the field on a per-capita basis than any other country in the world.¹⁰⁵ Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent by Canadians to support them. "In return," writes mission historian Ruth Compton Brouwer, "missionaries and missionary literature broadened the horizons of ordinary Canadians, providing them with the materials for a world view whose optimism and idealism would for long mask its less attractive aspects."¹⁰⁶ Missionaries and their reports also helped to shape their supporters into "Canadians." They encoded the ideals of Anglo-Protestant nationalism, which were to be the foundations of the new nation of Canada and legitimated the process of nation building that was taking place on the Canadian prairies.

Empire: The Japanese in Changchu, 1905-1945, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019); Diana Lary, "Manchuria: History and Environment," *Empire and Environment in the Making of Manchuria*, ed. Norman Smith (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017); Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904-1932* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2001); Norman Smith, *Intoxicating Manchuria: Alcohol, Opium, and Culture in China's Northeast* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012); Mariko Asano Tamanoi, ed., *Crossed Histories: Manchuria in the Age of Empire* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies, 2005).

¹⁰⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge Press, 1992), 6.

¹⁰⁵ Robert A. Wright, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 53.

¹⁰⁶ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New women for God : Canadian Presbyterian women and India missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 4.

Notions of British Protestant superiority were a central feature of the mission enterprise. The effort to convert the world to Christianity was largely the vision of an Anglo-American Christian community as witnessed by the overwhelmingly Anglo make up of the first worldwide missionary conference at Edinburgh in 1910.¹⁰⁷ Accordingly Canadian missionaries were by and large of Scottish or English origin. “They were,” says mission historian Hamish Ion, “in a real sense, overseas representatives of the Anglo-Scottish element in Canadian society. They were as Canadian as Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Andrew MacPhail or Stephen Leacock.”¹⁰⁸ And Canadian missionary prejudice was mirrored in Church agenda back home vis à vis the new Dominion of Canada, particularly in the western provinces where Anglo Protestant Christian prejudices against non-Protestant immigrants from south and east Europe and policies regarding indigenous people were apparent. A well-known example of this prejudiced approach was J.S. Woodsworth’s book, *Strangers At Our Gate*, which while expressing empathy for immigrants and their plight in Canada nonetheless betrayed concern about detrimental impact the influx of non-Anglo, non-Protestant migrants was having on Canadian civilization. As one commenter noted, Woodsworth’s gospel of nationalism trumped his gospel of love.¹⁰⁹ That such a thing can be said of such a sympathetic a figure as Woodsworth is testimony to the deeply ingrained nature of the Anglo-centric prejudices within Canadian Protestantism.

When the pioneer Canadian missionaries to Korea remarked on the similarities between Manchuria and the Canadian prairies and its excellent potential for mission work, they did so without a sense of irony regarding how their religion’s colonial commitment in Canada’s North-West ran directly counter to the aspirations of the Koreans with whom they worked. They were

¹⁰⁷ Wright, *A World Mission*, 109-110.

¹⁰⁸ Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 216-217.

¹⁰⁹ Marilyn Barber, “Introduction,” *Strangers Within Our Gates* by J.S. Woodsworth (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1972), xxii.

not self-conscious of the ways their work aligned with global imperial or colonial designs in direct contradiction to the Christianity of the Koreans with which they worked. Canadian church historian Brian Clarke asserts that the Canadian national project combined evangelical piety with Victorian social values and British patriotism. In particular, “[t]he British people were seen as a new Israel, chosen to spread true Christianity over the globe, and through the imperial connection Canadians would participate in the great work of the empire to free humanity from ignorance and sin.”¹¹⁰ In Manchuria, Canadian missionaries were likewise motivated by these assumptions about the superiority of British civilization and its inherent affinity with Christianity. In the same vein, they admired the degree to which Japan had adopted civilized Western approaches such as in matters of hygiene.¹¹¹ Studying in Canada in 1926, Moon Chai Rin was shocked to learn that his Canadian theological colleagues and professors all seemed to support Japanese Imperial aspirations in Korea.¹¹² For this reason, faced with the evident Korean nationalism that new converts associated with Christianity, Canadian missionaries often tried to play down the political implications of the Gospel.¹¹³

But Canadians, in time, became more aware of the internal contradictions of their mission. Despite their colonial/Imperial leanings, missionaries in Kando came to feel a great deal of sympathy for Koreans and their desire to be free of their Japanese overlords. Interviewee Kim Ikseon is unequivocal that Canadian missionaries embraced the role of guardians for their Korean friends. He recalls that one missionary, William Scott, often hid political fugitives in the

¹¹⁰ Brian Clarke, “English Speaking Canada from 1854,” in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin eds. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 270.

¹¹¹ J.D. Mansfield to A.E. Armstrong, 6 February 1911, file 5, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹¹² Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Keumanea Goom*, 179.

¹¹³ J.M. MacLeod to A.E. Armstrong, 15 November 1910, file 4, box 1, Accession #79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

mission compound.¹¹⁴ He was not the only one.¹¹⁵ But Scott and his Canadian colleagues were nonetheless conflicted. Despite their sympathy for Koreans experiencing violence and oppression, they tended to side with Japan as a source of stable modern government.¹¹⁶ Persecution of Koreans aside, Canadian missionaries preferred the steady policies of Japanese colonial rule to the relative chaos of an untested potential Korean government. The position of the Canadian mission, as expressed by the chair of the Foreign Board of Missions in Canada, was that missionaries approved of Japanese government, but not its methods in dealing with Korean opposition.¹¹⁷ What is more, when Canadian missionaries did criticize the Japanese government, they often leveraged their position as subjects of the British crown.¹¹⁸ The contradictions between the Canadians' own innate alignment with British imperialism and the nationalist commitments of their Korean Christian friends became obvious the longer they worked in Kando and northeastern Korea.

The impact of the Church Union movement and the creation of the UCC on the mission field in Korea offers a revealing example. At the turn of the 20th century, the venerable divines of an invigorated Canadian Protestant faith were dreaming of ways their religious movement could contribute to the building of the Dominion of Canada as an extension of British empire.¹¹⁹ Church Union was premised on the assumption that church and government should have a close partnership, an idea with historical roots in the history of Christendom. The idea of a united

¹¹⁴ Scott in his history does not mention this, perhaps out of a sense of modesty.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Kim Ik-seon, 5 July 2019; Glover, "Friends, Foes and Partners," 194-217; Murray, *At the Foot of Dragon Hill*, 37; . Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 192;

¹¹⁶ Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 203.

¹¹⁷ Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun*, 206.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Brian Clarke, "English Speaking Canada from 1854," *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin eds. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 261; Phyllis Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 4.

Protestant church played on the logic that such a church could play a strong role in tandem with the government of the new nation. The decision of the majority of Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist congregations in Canada to form the UCC, however, did not arise solely from out of the Canadian context. It was, in fact, largely influenced by the missionary movement itself which envisioned a kind of international order whose backbone was a Protestant Christian culture.

When Canadian missionaries first arrived in Korea, their consultation with other missions in Korea to divide regions of activity and to cooperate on joint institutional projects was not an accident or peculiarity of the Korean mission field. Rather, cooperation between the different missions was an approach that reflected an emerging trend towards cooperation on the part of missions globally. A posterchild for what could happen if Protestant churches did not cooperate in missions was in fact the Canadian prairies where Methodists, Presbyterians and other denominations were each building separate churches in small towns with a population that could barely support one.¹²⁰ The missionary movement itself had done a lot to impress on the various Protestant denominations around the world that much could be gained through cooperation rather than competition. After all, what they had in common far outweighed their differences, particularly when it came to their mission of making civilized Protestants of those of different religions and cultures they regarded as inferior. By the time of the first World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, different mission stations of various denominations had already been thinking of ways that efforts on the mission field could be coordinated and merged. Canadian churches were ahead of the curve. In 1904, with an expansive mission field to new prairie populations in its own backyard, the Joint Committee of Presbyterian, Methodist and

¹²⁰ Clarke, "English Speaking Canada from 1854," 342.

Congregationalists had been formed to come up with a theological statement that could serve as a basis of union for the disparate denominations.¹²¹ In Korea, the various missions also sought to unify their efforts in the early 1900s. They formed committees to look at sharing educational and medical institutions. But these efforts never got off the ground. Korean mission history Lak-Geon Paik suggested that it was the success of the missions, the rate at which Koreans were entering the church, that made it easier for missions simply to focus on their own work and less inclined to spend precious time working out ways to cooperate.¹²²

By 1925, when Church Union was achieved in Canada and the Canadian Presbyterian mission became the UCC Korea Mission, the mood among many missionaries in Korea toward church union had changed. American missionaries of a more conservative ilk had become suspicious of what they perceived as a liberal theology animating the project.¹²³ Korean church leaders with close affiliation to the Canadians reported that they were still in favour of a united Korean church of some kind. However, they had to admit that interest was weak in their Korean Christian circles “largely owing,” said one, “to the fact that division of the field under mission comity has almost completely avoided denominational rivalry.”¹²⁴ In other words, the status quo seemed to be working quite well. It is likely that there were other reasons, too. As time went on the Church Union movement on the Korean mission field became more and more problematic. The Japanese imperial government began to take a positive view of church union for reasons which demonstrate the affinity of the idea with colonial statecraft; rather than a means to allow Christian influence upon the government, the creation of a single Christian denomination was a

¹²¹ Airhart, *A Church with a Soul of a Nation*, 32, 33.

¹²² Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 378ff.

¹²³ William Scott to A.E. Armstrong, 9 August 1926, file 3 (Correspondence Dr. Armstrong – Rev. Wm. Scott), box 1, Accession 83.006C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹²⁴ Kim Kwan Shik, notes on work in the Korean church, no date, file 56, box 2, Accession 83.006C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

tool by which the state could more easily exercise influence over the church. Indeed, a unified governing structure was eventually forced on churches throughout the Japanese Empire.¹²⁵ The association in Korea of church union with the Japanese colonial government ensured that the idea would be completely abandoned in the post-war period.

The contradictions of Canadian Protestant nationalism which manifested themselves in Kando continued to haunt Canadian missionaries when they returned to Korea after the war. Writing to encourage Canadian youth to consider overseas mission work in Korea in 1931, mission enthusiast Allan Clark declared that there had occurred a shift in mission attitudes towards non-Western people: “Folks used to think these folk in mission lands were inferior sort of human beings, perhaps a little higher than the beasts but not a great deal,” he said, “We have gotten beyond that now and we know that for intellectual capacity and every other capacity the best of this land [Korea] need not take a back seat from the best of any land.”¹²⁶ But the truth of the matter was that assumptions of Western superiority persisted as did the inclination to side with colonial power against the colonized, facts that will become clear in following chapters. Likewise, the contradictions inherent in the idea of a unified Protestant church also continued to create problems for Koreans associated with the UCC. As Koreans began to emigrate to Canada, denominational tension created by Church Union sowed division among the new immigrants.¹²⁷

Conclusion

Yun Dong-ju’s life ended in a Japanese prison, months before the ending of the Pacific War. Far from home it is likely his thoughts in the last months of his life continued to skirt the

¹²⁵ Scott, *Canadian Mission to Korea*, 638-639.

¹²⁶ Allen Clark to Young People of Canada, 18 May 1931, file 47, box 2, Accession 83.006C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹²⁷ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom*, 275.

hills of his hometown and peer deeply into the tragic nationalistic struggles that seethed like dragons in the hearts of the various people who lived there. For those interested in the trajectory of the Canadian church, the reflection in far off Dragon's Well also offers a surprising self-portrait, one that traces the shadowy outlines of a colonial past against the background of bright new religious movements and fresh historical winds of political emancipation.

As Mary Louis Pratt predicted, the contact zone of the mission field, particularly that part which encompassed the hinterland of Manchuria, was a place that shaped the Canadian church's self understanding. It helped to reinforce its own received colonial notions of western superiority and benevolence. But it also challenged them. It was not a static place but a place of becoming. The emerging Korean Protestantism was infused with nationalism in the same way that the religion of the Canadian missionaries was. It was, however, not the same kind of nationalism. Its political assumptions and goals were diametrically opposed on the question of the virtues of colonial governments. Whereas missionary faith understood itself to be in support of Empire, the Korean religious faith saw itself as Empire's opponent. One came from a place where a long-established tradition of Protestant Christianity sought to partner with colonial forces to build a new nation, the other found scope in Protestantism as a new religion to oppose colonialist forces and restore the independence and dignity of an ancient one. Despite their differences, the Canadians could not help but admire their new Korean friends and found themselves conflicted with regard to their old assumptions about who they were.

"The community in between," as the name Kando means, was a place where different people encountered one another for the first time in an environment contested by many nations and nationalities. For Canadian missionaries there were clear parallels with the prairies back home, an important site for the Canadian nation-building project. The missionaries were forced

to wrestle with the problematic impact of the Church Union movement on the mission field, a movement that, along with the goal to convert the world to Christianity, lay at the heart of their nationalist dream of an Anglo-Protestant civilization extending beyond Canada to a new international order. While relationships that developed on this mission field contributed to the education and modernization of Korean society and shaped Korean Christianity, they also challenged Canadian missionaries' assumptions and set the stage for a broader challenge to the UCC and other mainline Protestant denominations in Canada in the postcolonial period. This history of the beginning of the Canadian Protestant mission to Korea, which coincided with Church Union in Canada, helps to explain the diverging trajectories of Canadian and Korean Protestant churches in the postwar period.

CHAPTER 2

Sin and Friendship in a Time of Uprisings:

The Discourse on Mission on the UCC Korea Mission Field, 1960s

Westerners do not easily accept the one-world idea; their heritage is one of domination, and new forms of Western domination continue to appear through the exercise of economic power and through foreign investments in lands where colonial power has been supplanted by ineffectual forms of self-government[...] The one-world concept of secular society and the “Mission to Six Continents” concept of the churches are both related to a central question in the world today: How can mutual respect be achieved?¹

(from the *Report of Commission on World Mission*, 1966)

Introduction

The above quote from the United Church of Canada (UCC) *Report of the Commission on World Mission* demonstrates that by 1966 some in the church had an awareness of the fundamental issues of colonial history and of the church’s challenge in addressing them. During the 1960s, as indigenous churches on the mission fields were pushing back against decades of Canadian missionary paternalism, leadership in the UCC connected to missionary activities was trying to get out ahead of the changes. It was now talking about “partnership,” “mutuality” and “Mission to Six Continents” (which included Europe and North America) rather than “winning souls” and “foreign missions to the heathen.” Substantive change, however, was being held back by lingering colonial attitudes and practices. A study of missionary correspondence from Korea during this period of political upheaval provides insight into the contradictions that existed within the UCC as it tried to come to terms with the new postcolonial context.

¹Report of the Commission on World Mission, UCC yearbook 1966, 322.

In the 1960s, an inter-church dialogue took place between the UCC and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). The PROK-UCC relationship was unique among UCC mission relationships which included, at this time, stations in Japan, Angola, Trinidad, and India. The UCC regarded the PROK as a “daughter church” because the UCC had played a special role in its creation and felt a degree of responsibility for it.² But many in the PROK felt that their “mother church” was a little overbearing. Missionaries were proving contrarian, quick to use their spiritual authority to accuse Koreans of wrongdoing and held a tight grip on the purse strings. The PROK’s challenge to the UCC Korea Mission was encouraged by dramatic political events such as student demonstrations that toppled Korea’s authoritarian government as Korean society struggled to get out from under a colonial past.

The contributions of Wilna Thomas, an important female pioneer in the UCC and Secretary for overseeing missionary work in East Asia, to this PROK-UCC dialogue offer a glimpse of the kind of policy changes the UCC was trying to implement as complaints from churches in Korea and around the world were coming to the attention of the Canadian church. Thomas was progressive in her approach and brought to her job a keen ear and a practice of journaling, which distinguished her from her male predecessors. But she also carried colonial baggage acquired in Canada and as a missionary in Japan, baggage that prevented her from perceiving the contradictions between the words and actions of the UCC in Korea. The record that she left bears witness to the ways the UCC sought to change. The push back by the PROK against Thomas’ agenda reveals lingering colonial patterns that had been hidden beneath her progressive missiological discourse.

² Report of the Commission on World Mission, UCC Yearbook 1966, 395.

Thomas drew on new concepts developed to guide the missionary relationships the UCC had cultivated with churches around the world. One of the points of contention in the new UCC approach was the relationship between evangelism and service. Protestant churches in Canada had long held these objectives in tension, but together. The beginning of the Korean church also held in creative tension the idea that individual and social salvation were not mutually exclusive ideas. Charity and conversion had both long been the focus of the Christian church. But the new focus of the UCC on service in the mission field alarmed some in the Korean church and was seen in Canada as evidence that the UCC leadership was out of touch with their own base at home who financially supported the mission. Canadian Church historian Kevin Flatt has argued that it was in this period that the leadership of the UCC systematically dismantled the evangelical identity of the church and replaced it with a new exclusively social service-oriented one without the consent of the church at large.³ These tensions were clearly evident in Thomas' interactions in Korea.

“Partnership” and “mutuality” were also part of a revamped vocabulary that was meant to emphasise a sharing of power when it came to resources and decision making in matters concerning the UCC-Korean church relationship. “Mission” was no longer to refer to Western church enterprises exported to other parts of the world, but to a conviction that all, including Western Christians and Western society, were equally in need of the grace of God and the help of others. But even as these ideas were being introduced by the UCC to the Korean church it became evident that they had failed to overcome the colonial attitudes that they had meant to fix with their new approach. For Koreans who had not participated in the development of the new missiology, the debate came down, instead, to two very old concepts with personal, rather than

³ Kevin N. Flatt, *After Evangelicalism: The Sixties and the United Church of Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 14.

institutional, connotations. The first was “sin,” a theological concept with power to shame. Canadian missionaries used this word to characterize Korean behaviour and it hurt. Korean’s felt the word was being hurled at them, not because they were doing wrong, but because the Canadian missionaries did not truly understand them. The second was “friendship,” a desired relationship of mutual trust, which Koreans felt had eluded their dealings with the Canadians. The sting of being labelled “sinners” and the desire for “friends” revealed a lot about the PROK-UCC relationship and what needed to change.

A Period of Uprisings: the 1960s

“Dear Mrs. Taylor,” wrote Saskatchewan-born UCC missionary Romona Underwood to Ruth Taylor the chair of the UCC Woman Missionary Society in 1960, “I apologize to you if I have caused you additional concern and work by not writing to you about the political events of the past few weeks.”⁴ The letter was more than a few weeks late. The political events she refers to in June had occurred in mid-April. Later known simply by the numbers marking the date of April 19 on which it occurred, “4.19” was a student led movement that toppled the government of Rhee Syng Man.

Rhee, the first President of the Republic of Korea, had been all but directly installed by the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) that had taken control of the Korean peninsula south of the 38th parallel following the capitulation of Japan at the end of WWII.⁵ There had been a delay of some months between the surrender of Japan and the moment when US forces had been able to arrive. In the brief interlude local Korean councils had

⁴ Letter of Romona Underwood to Mrs. Taylor of the WMS, 2 June 1960, Series 9, Box #83, Accession 83.058C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁵ Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 232.

effectively managed the business of running the country and expected to be given lead roles in a liberated Korea. While not communist, these councils often had socialist leanings, something that made the new American military government uncomfortable. Though promising democracy, Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, the military governor of South Korea, called an election under conditions that divided the country and that Rhee won despite the absence of popular support.⁶

From the start, Rhee's methods were authoritarian. Historians have concluded that this was largely in order to make up for the absence of grassroots support for his government.⁷ However, as historians of Korean Christianity Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim have shown, Protestant and Catholic churches were not bothered by Rhee's authoritarianism and lined up to support him.⁸ The extent to which the Christian churches were out of sync with most Koreans is revealed through opinion polls that showed that, a year after Rhee was elected, public opinion in South Korea was still overwhelmingly in favour of socialism. A group of right-wing paramilitary youth under Rhee's influence called the Northwest Youth terrorized neighbourhoods where there were known to be socialists and communist sympathizers.⁹ The Korean military, aided and abetted by US advisors, carried out massacres and atrocities in the lead up to and following elections.¹⁰ As Rhee's government lost any semblance of virtue and abandoned all pretence of democracy the population grew disillusioned. Larger and larger

⁶ Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, eds., *A History of Korean Christianity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 157, 172.

⁷ Kang Man-gil, *A History of Contemporary Korea* (Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 1994), 187; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 185ff.

⁸ Kim and Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 178.

⁹ Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, 244ff, 259.

¹⁰ Brendan Wright, "Raising the Korean War Dead: Bereaved Family Associations and the Politics of 1960-1961 South Korea," *The Asia-Pacific Journal - Japan Focus*, Volume 13, Issue 41, Number 2, Oct 12, 2015. <https://apjif.org/-Brendan-Wright/4387/article.pdf>, viewed on 1 September 2019.

student-led rallies against government violence, corruption and election meddling culminated on 19 April 1960 with police opening fire on a demonstration in Seoul. Nearly 200 lost their lives and Rhee, by this time an embarrassment to the US, stepped down under pressure. The events were memorialized in Korean culture with the numerals 4.19, marking the day (April 19) on which many lost their lives. Their sacrifice inaugurated a brief moment of Korean sovereignty. Those who had been persecuted because of their perceived or actual socialist leanings were able to air their grievances for the first time and reconciliation with North Korea was openly discussed.¹¹ Elections were held, and a progressive government was elected.

The letter from Underwood to Taylor positions the moment on the cusp of changes for Korea and the UCC mission. The events of 4.19 echoed for the missionaries in Korea, and perhaps even more so for supporters back home in Canada, with memories of such events as the Boxer Uprisings in China two generations earlier that had serious consequences for many UCC missionaries working there.¹² “One or two of our missionaries packed bags in case of evacuation, I suspect the majority of us did so mentally,” wrote Underwood.¹³ Although they had, in fact, never been in danger in Korea,¹⁴ the concern expressed serves to show that missionary memories of colonial times and fear of the colonized “other” were still very much alive among Canadian missionaries and in the church back in Canada. It is also telling that church members in Canada would interpret actions to assert political sovereignty on the part of the Korean people as a potential threat to missionaries.

¹¹ Wright, “Raising the Korean War Dead”; Charles R. Kim, *Youth for Nation: Culture and Protest in Cold War South Korea*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2017), 179.

¹² Letter of Romona Underwood to Mrs. Taylor of the WMS, 2 June 1960, Series 9, Box #83, Accession 83.058C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 173.

It is notable as well that Underwood in her letter felt it important to mention the fact that the missionaries had been brave and continued to model Christian behavior. “Some of the missionaries donated blood at Severance Hospital,” she wrote, “and actually set the example which was followed by some of the Koreans.”¹⁵ This account of the commendable act of citizenship, which they performed on the grounds of a hospital with connections to the UCC mission, was a well-used trope in the Missionary Movement. It had been used to justify the Missionary Enterprise with the idea that missionaries the world over were teaching others how to be model modern nationals. In 1960, on the cusp of significant changes to the church back home and a global shift in the politics of former colonies this was still a message UCC missionaries were uncritically repeating to themselves.

Although church leaders in Canada feared the consequences of Korean political dissent, Underwood showed understanding of the political significance of events and empathized with the protestors. Underwood was clearly in solidarity with the students in what they had accomplished. “At first, in spite of my concern and sympathy for the students who lost their lives and their families,” wrote Underwood to Taylor, “my personal reaction was one of resurgence of hope for the welfare of this country. I must admit I have been very discouraged during the past year and particularly at the time of the March 15th election. The students have been the great heroes of the crusade against corruption[.]”¹⁶ Students of the 4.19 uprising gave voice to a general desire among Koreans, north and south of the 38th parallel, for greater sovereignty in the decisions of the nation. Underwood

¹⁵ Letter of Romona Underwood to Mrs. Taylor of the WMS, 2 June 1960, Series 9, Box #83, Accession 83.058C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹⁶ Ibid.

understood and sympathized despite the colonial tradition of the UCC in which she found herself.

Tensions and contradictions existed in Korean society as well. The student demands stressed the need not only for democracy in the south, but also reunification with the north. Ironically, it was student action to organize a meeting with North Korean counterparts at Panmunjom, the village straddling the dividing line between North and South, that provided South Korean General Park Chung Hee with the pretext for the military overthrow of the democratically elected government that had been the crowning achievement of their 4.19 uprising.¹⁷ Dismissing the barely-one-year-old government as weak, Park led a coup on May 16, 1961 (5.16). In the years following that coup he would impose a disciplined, militaristic, ideologically anti-communist and gendered program of modernization that would make a deep imprint on South Korean society for decades to come.¹⁸

As the 46th General Assembly of the PROK gathered in 1961, days after the 5.16 coup, political developments would no doubt have been on the minds of its members. Kim Chai Choon, a founding leader of the fledgling PROK, was swift in his condemnation of the military action.¹⁹ Others like him were genuinely distraught by the blow to Korean democracy. As urgent and dramatic as national politics were at that moment however, missionary relationships were the hottest issue in PROK circles. When the question of UCC missionary attitudes towards the Korean church came up for discussion at the General Assembly, emotions erupted. At issue was the lack of trust and respect missionaries were showing to their Korean partners.

¹⁷ Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 179; Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 66.

¹⁸ Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship*.

¹⁹ Kim Kyeong-jae, *Biography of Kim Chai Choon* (Seoul: Samin Book, 2001), 184.

Missionaries, it was charged, hovered over their Korean colleagues accusing them of the misuse of funds and wielding the charge of ‘sin.’²⁰ Koreans took exception to this treatment.²¹ An angry motion was passed that the Korean church would no longer request funds from the UCC.²²

This was the first such open conflict between Korean Christians and the UCC Korea Mission since the 1920s when students had set fire to a Mission-run school to protest the missionaries’ funding priorities.²³ This 1960s outcry might well be understood as the resumption of a contentious debate that had been interrupted by the Pacific and Korean Wars. That debate had focussed around the sharing of decision-making responsibilities in mission institutions.²⁴ Koreans wanted more say. In 1926, the Canadian missionaries responded with an attempt to ‘devolve’ power and include Koreans on school and hospital boards. But the issue had never been adequately resolved and the relationship of the Korean and Canadian churches following the liberation and the Korean war had regressed. “The decision,” forty years later, to reject UCC funding was, therefore, a long time coming. And it was of such significance that it came to be known in this shorthand for many years. It marked the reengagement of the Korean Church with its Canadian missionary partners in a manner that spoke directly to the idea of sovereignty for Koreans. Discontinuance by the PROK of the only major source of overseas funding had huge consequences for the young Korean Presbyterian denomination, which had splintered just 6 years earlier from the biggest Presbyterian denomination in Korea, the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK). The church was financially fragile. The UCC was the

²⁰ Report submitted by the Very Rev. Lee, Nam Kyoo to the mission work policy study committee 20 February 1963, Box#14, Accession # 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

²¹ Consultation between Leaders of Presbyterian Church ROK, Rev. E.F. Carey and UCC Missionaries dated 23 November 1971, File # A-232, Box #10, Accession # 83.011C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

²² UCC Yearbook 1962, 187.

²³ Frederick J. Glover, “Friends, Foes and Partners: The Relationship between the Canadian Missionaries and the Korean Christians in North-eastern Korea and Manchuria from 1898 until 1927,” *Studies in World Christianity: The Edinburgh Review of Theology and Religion*, Vol. 23:3, (2017), pp.194-217.

²⁴ Frederick Glover, “Friends, Foes and Partners”, 200.

only overseas church that supported them. “The decision” inevitably, therefore, precipitated earnest efforts at reconciliation on both sides. A lively debate ensued over the course of which a new missiology began to be articulated.

The 4.19 uprising, the 5.16 coup and “the decision” were part of a decolonizing moment for the Korean nation and church. It is possible the Canadians of the UCC Korea Mission were partly aware of the significance of events that were occurring around them.²⁵ In Toronto, the UCC metropole, there is no doubt that the church bureaucracy was starting to come to grips with a sea-change in their foreign missions around the world. In 1962, the Woman Missionary Society (WMS) and its Board of Overseas Missions (BOM) were amalgamated into the Board of World Mission (BWM). The omission of the final “s” in “Mission” indicated a more global understanding of Christian work.²⁶ In the same year a Commission on World Mission was struck by the UCC General Council to do a comprehensive re-thinking of the history and direction of missionary activity and church missions. Fundamental to these moves was a new awareness that whereas the UCC had once considered others to be exclusively in need of the gospel, the Canadian and other Western churches were now regarded as possibly in need of some evangelization as well. On the surface, this was an act of humility that acknowledged the leadership and vital contribution of non-western Christians. Korean theology student, Lee Young Min, was studying in Canada on a UCC scholarship at the time. Discussions were taking place in UCC circles around him concerning “a new day’s mission policy along with a new role

²⁵ Korea, Report of Board of Overseas Missions, UCC Yearbook, 1962, 187.

²⁶ Brouwer, “When Missions Became Development,” 667; Sandra Beardshall, “‘And Whether Pigs Have Wings’: The United Church in the 1960s,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), 105.

for missionaries.” To him the moment felt “truly opportune” and he was left with a profound sense that the UCC was about to make “a big switch in the right direction.”²⁷

The UCC bureaucracy was also getting a new face to go with its new mission organization and policy. In 1960, Wilna Thomas became the Executive Secretary of Overseas Missions and, in 1962, the Associate Secretary of the new BWM with responsibilities for East Asia. Wilna Gratia Thomas, was born on March 6, 1917 in Ogema, Saskatchewan.²⁸ The only student in her class at her rural school to advance to university, she graduated with great distinction earning a BA in mathematics and economics from the University of Saskatchewan.²⁹ Soon after, she enrolled at the United Church Training Centre to begin a career in church work. While studying there a request came to the United Church for a woman to provide spiritual support to the Canadian Women’s Army Corps. When she graduated from her theological program in 1941, Thomas was recommended for the work of military chaplain.³⁰ She began her service with a rank of Lieutenant at the Advanced Training Centre in Ste. Anne de Bellevue,³¹ one of the first two women padres in the Canadian army.³²

After being decommissioned from work in the army in 1946, Wilna applied for a position with the WMS serving in Japan and was sent overseas in 1947. Unlike her ground-breaking role as one of the army’s first women chaplains, as a single female missionary Thomas was part of a long tradition of women who had gone before her. By the 1940s, the missionary vocation had been offering women unique opportunities for personal and professional development for over a

²⁷ Lee Young Min, “A reflection on the history of mission and cooperation of the churches in Canada and Korea”, Mission consultation between the UCC and the PROK, 16-18 August 1995, Academy House, Seoul, author’s personal collection.

²⁸ Jara Smith, *A Tree Planted by the Water: the Wilna Thomas Story* (Victoria, BC: The Estate of Wilna Thomas, 1993), 2.

²⁹ Smith, *A Tree Planted by the Water*, 4.

³⁰ Smith, *A Tree Planted by the Water*, 5.

³¹ Smith, *A Tree Planted by the Water*, 14.

³² Wilna Thomas fonds, Accession #94 .053C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

century. Single female missionaries, not usually from elite backgrounds, often managed to achieve a kind of elite status in Canadian society and abroad³³ and the work offered unmarried women attractive careers in places others could only dream of going.³⁴ Under the guise of helping their 'heathen sisters,' missionary women had been both helping themselves and proving to women back home that they were more than capable of doing work that had once been considered exclusively men's domain.³⁵ From its beginnings in the mid-1800s the tradition of single female missionaries had been a significant contribution on the Canadian mission field. Combined with that of missionary wives, the numbers of female missionaries easily exceeded those of their male colleagues. In 1960, the UCC Korea Mission, for example, employed 13 male missionaries and 21 female, nine of them single.³⁶ In some places, however, the number of single women exceeded those of all male colleagues on their own.³⁷ Serving as a single female missionary was nothing new, but the tradition as such was one of women pioneering new roles for women.

After serving in Japan for more than a decade, Thomas returned to Canada in 1960 to take an executive position in the Church hierarchy. With this move Thomas was once again trailblazing for women by breaking through a glass ceiling for female leadership in the church bureaucracy. This was another first for Canadian women in the Protestant church: the first woman to serve in an executive position in the UCC with responsibility for male missionaries as well as female. Thomas has not been remembered in the UCC for her two pioneering roles,

³³ Brouwer, *New Women for God*, 57.

³⁴ Brouwer, *New Women for God*, 70; Marta Danylewycza, *Taking the veil: an alternative to marriage, motherhood, and spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920* (Toronto : McClelland & Stewart, 1987); Rosemary R Gagan, *A sensitive independence : Canadian Methodist women missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), x.

³⁵ Brouwer, *New Women for God*, 52.,

³⁶ Report of the Commission on World Mission, Appendix B, Year Book 1966, UCC GC, 1966, 439.

³⁷ Brouwer, *New Women for God*, 5.

forgotten between the landmark events of Lydia Gruchy's ordination as the first female UCC minister in 1936 and Lois Wilson's ordination as the first married woman minister in the UCC in 1965 and later first female moderator in 1980. In 1960, however, Thomas' achievement was another important first for women and a sign of the times for women in Canada who in the sixties saw indigenous women win the vote, Quebec married women receive the same rights as their husbands, freedom from discrimination enshrined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the advent of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.³⁸

It is to be wondered what impression this sign of the times made on those with whom Thomas came into contact as she visited UCC mission fields around the world. As new churches in places like Korea had received a patriarchal tradition of male church leadership from missionaries which had often reinforced indigenous cultural patterns, it is worth asking about the indigenous male response to a woman at the top of the church hierarchy. Though Thomas' notes contain no hint of whether there had been a reaction to her as a woman, good or bad, some idea of the response may be attained by considering reactions of the indigenous male colleagues to female colleagues with whom they worked in the pre-war days. When Canadian Missions scholar Ruth Compton Brouwer asked a Korean male medical student with first-hand experience working under a female missionary doctor what it was like to work for a woman, she realized the question was likely inane. Though the situation certainly "called for an all around wariness" on a number of levels, Brouwer surmises, it would not preclude the ability to work together on a project that was clearly important.³⁹ Also, the fact that Thomas had received the position with

³⁸ <https://www.ournellie.com/learn/womens-suffrage/canadian-history-of-womens-rights/> viewed 17 September 2019

³⁹ Brouwer, *New Women for God*, x.

the support of her male colleagues would certainly have carried weight with the Koreans she had met.⁴⁰

The Charge of Sin and an Agenda for Change

While the record is mute and it is hard to know the spectrum of responses Koreans might have had to Thomas as a woman in authority, it is clear that by the time of her appointment to a position in the oversight of other missionaries and mission fields, Thomas had already formed an idea of Koreans and that it was not at all positive. In 1957, Thomas had been asked to be part of an ecumenical mission to visit Korea and meet with students to discuss the theme of “Revolution and Reconciliation.” The wounds of Japanese colonialism in Korea were still fresh, and it was impossible for a Japanese citizen to get a visa to visit Korea. As a Canadian with a connection to the Japanese church, therefore, Thomas, who was serving as a missionary to Japan at the time, was asked to represent the Japanese church on the visit.⁴¹ Her delegation met 3000 Korean students in fifteen different universities and discussed various intra-Korean controversies in the church. Notably, the split in the PCK that had resulted in the creation of the PROK was talked about. This was a particularly important issue for UCC missionaries, as it had been the decision of the UCC to align its mission with the PROK. In doing so the UCC had been alone among foreign missions in Korea in siding with a small group of leaders and congregations expelled from the Presbyterian body politic over the issue of biblical criticism and missionary control of theological education. Curiously, while in Korea Thomas was left with the impression that the split was due to nothing more than an internal Korean power struggle. “One group is definitely fundamentalist; the other group is called liberal, but is so conservative I could scarcely tell the

⁴⁰ Brouwer, *New Women for God*, 84.

⁴¹ Smith, *A Tree Planted by the Water*, 35.

difference. Perhaps a greater reason for the split has been the clash of personalities, and the desire for power on the part of certain leaders.”⁴² This assessment would have been quite surprising to UCC missionary colleagues working for the UCC Korea Mission. For William Scott, a UCC missionary in Korea since 1914, the issue was clearly one of theological principles and a case, not of Korean infighting, but rather of Korean Christian integrity in the face of American missionary meddling.⁴³ “It is difficult to avoid the conclusion,” he wrote, that those responsible for the split had one thing in mind: the elimination of the anti-fundamentalist and independent voice in the life of the Presbyterian Church in Korea.⁴⁴ Thomas had somehow failed to appreciate this.

The possible reasons for Thomas’ cynical view of the Korean church split are worth considering. It is possible that Thomas was not debriefed by a UCC Korea Mission colleague and therefore left in the dark about its circumstances. Or it could be that she was briefed by someone who did not share the same opinion as Scott. It is unlikely that a negative view of the PROK was prevalent in the UCC Korea Mission, however. The split had affected everyone in the Mission and all the missionaries would have been well acquainted with its details. UCC leadership in Canada had been solidly behind the PROK and the delegation sent to assess the division of the Korean Presbyterian church was clear that the UCC should align itself with those who had been kicked out of the PCK. The PROK, they felt, was a denomination that more closely reflected its own theological commitments and ethos.⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 785-789. Scott’s claims are well documented although they contradict views held by American Missionary and Mission Historian Samuel J. Moffett.

⁴⁴ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 788.

⁴⁵ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 810.

Thomas' blanket judgement of the Korean church likely had another source: the colonial biases of Canada and Japan. The history of the Canadian Protestant church's connection to colonialism has been discussed in chapter 1. Raised in a Canadian Protestant environment, Thomas would, like the missionaries that preceded her, have been inclined towards a view of the world that sided with colonial power rather than with the colonized. Further, having served in Japan for 7 years she would have been exposed to the views of Japanese regarding their erstwhile colony. Mission historian Hamish Ion has noted that Canadian missionaries serving in Japan easily adopted Japanese colonial attitudes regarding Koreans and Taiwanese.⁴⁶ Thomas' reflections in the 1950s and 1960s would definitely have represented a dominant Japanese stereotype of Koreans.⁴⁷

The issue that interested Thomas on her first trip to Korea in 1957 was more Korean-Japanese relations than inter-Korean conflict. There were clearly strong opinions in Korea against doing things together with the Japanese church. In her reflections on the visit she shows some sympathy for the Koreans and their experience of colonization. "I think we can understand why the Korean people think and feel as they do," reported Thomas regarding the distrust and resentment she encountered in Korean Christians for Japanese people. "For thirty-six years they were under Japanese rule. They couldn't use their own language. They had to change their names. No Korean could advance to a position of leadership." The legacy of bitterness and disfunction for Thomas, however, was more the responsibility of the Koreans than of the Japanese, "Children were taught that to lie and to deceive the Japanese authorities was good.

⁴⁶ A. Hamish Ion, "Canadian Missionaries under the Japanese Empire" in *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: Representing Religion at Home and Abroad*, eds. Alwyn Austin and Jamie S. Scott, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 180.

⁴⁷ Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletariat Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 2009), 18.

Now those children are the leaders. They have no training for it. Deceit and distrust are evident in every area of life. Even Church leaders deal in the black market.”⁴⁸

These views seem to have carried over into Thomas’ visits as Executive Secretary in the 1960s. Her notes from the 1961 visit demonstrate an interest in reconciliation between Japanese and Koreans but put the onus on Koreans. She felt it was incumbent upon Korean Christian students as Christians to forgive their Japanese counterparts for the colonial history they had endured.⁴⁹ Their failure to do so disturbed her. She felt it was an example of human “sinfulness,”⁵⁰ a theological category that carried particular weight, not to say baggage. There is nowhere in her discussion of the trip to Japan that she speaks of the need for repentance on the part of the Japanese. In subsequent visits to Korea, Thomas reiterates the idea that the Korean church was riddled with corruption,⁵¹ a perspective that was not shared by all Korean missionaries and never corroborated as fact in any other missionary documents.

The notes from Thomas’ visits to Korea and other mission fields as Mission Secretary in the early 1960s, however, were not completely coloured by her bias and indeed reflect an evolution towards a more positive assessment of Koreans. She concluded her 1964 visit in Korea by saying that although the Korean Church was “fraught by all the sins of institutionalism that are part of the weakness of the Church everywhere” she nonetheless “left Korea more conscious of the opportunities confronting the Church than in its weaknesses in meeting them.”⁵²

⁴⁸ Smith, *A Tree Planted by the Water*, 37.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Notebook on Korea, circa 1961, Wilna Thomas fonds, Korea notes File #3, Box #2, Accession #94.053C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

⁵¹ Letter from Wilna Thomas to Mrs. Taylor, 27 March 1961, Wilna Thomas fonds, Africa/India Correspondence notes File #2-1, Accession #94.053C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

⁵² Smith, *A Tree Planted by the Water*, 81.

Thomas' notes paint a complex and multidimensional picture of a mission in a state of liminality. Clearly things were changing, but the direction of that change was not yet clear.

Canadian mission historian Rosemary Gagan has noted that Canadian women in mission often sincerely believed in “the ideal of a universal sisterhood transcending race and class” even if this was not always achieved.⁵³ Brouwer has further noted that the changing attitudes towards race and the increasing level of education in non-Western countries would have made mutuality in relationships between missionaries and indigenous Christians more easy to attain as time went on.⁵⁴ There is no doubt that Thomas tried hard to listen and to respect the people she met while visiting other countries. Her notes' unique attention to the voices of the Christians she came into contact with overseas distinguishes them from the records kept by her male predecessors and are a special example of attentiveness and openness to the voices of those she encountered in Korea and elsewhere.⁵⁵ But in addition to betraying a Japanese bias against Koreans, she seems not to have been able to escape the pattern of the Canadian church's history of paternalism. After all, Thomas had not come to Korea to listen only. She was there to make decisions about the dispersal of funds. And Thomas was determined to combine this fiscal power with a lesson to enlighten Koreans.

Thomas' notebooks from 1961 and 1964 trips to Korea outline the main points she sought to make as she met with local leaders. In her talks at PROK presbyteries around the peninsula Thomas introduced the UCC's new approach, one that had been developed in consultations at ecumenical institutions such as the World Council of Churches (WCC), but not directly with the local Korean churches or with other indigenous or Canadian church members for that matter.

⁵³ Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence*, x-xi.

⁵⁴ Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men*, 25.

⁵⁵ These records can be found in the Wilna Thomas fonds at the United Church Archives, Toronto.

This was a position that stressed social service rather than making converts as a focus of mission work. The “new” approach was actually not new. As early as the 1890s, the Social Gospel movement, which also emphasized social change over individual conversion, had been a prominent feature of the Canadian Protestant church and others around the world.⁵⁶ But the exclusion of concern for evangelism marked an important shift.

Some might have said that Thomas was a harbinger of the avalanche of secularization sweeping the Canadian church and society.⁵⁷ The leadership in Canada preferred to think of it as winning souls through “service for Christ’s sake,”⁵⁸ but there is no doubt the emphasis had changed. In Canada, the church was having trouble reconciling these two aspects of Christianity, which they had managed to hold together in a tight knot for since Church Union. The idea of a liberal evangelical had come to seem oxymoronic.⁵⁹ This is not to say that the church did not understand its work in terms of making new Christians, or that those focussed on social justice were in fact abandoning evangelical commitments rather than clarifying them. However, in the religious psyche of the UCC leadership it was becoming very difficult in the 1960s to hold the two concepts together. And the leaders of the church were embracing this social justice language more enthusiastically than the people in the pews. It is doubtful that congregation members of the UCC back in Canada who supported overseas missions with their financial offerings were on board with the new understanding of mission as purely service.⁶⁰ Historians of Canadian religion have pointed out that this new approach represented a significant break from the Canadian Protestantism of the interwar period that had managed to maintain the centrality of a more

⁵⁶ Richard Allen, “Social Gospel”, published online 7 February 2006.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/social-gospel>, viewed 22 July 2019.

⁵⁷ Brouwer, “When Missions Became Development,” 665.

⁵⁸ Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 243.

⁵⁹ Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 253.

⁶⁰ Brouwer, “When Missions Became Development,” 683.

traditional definition of evangelism in balance with a socially oriented approach.⁶¹ In the lead-up to WWII the emphasis of the UCC had in fact shifted back to a more aggressively evangelistic vision of Christian mission.⁶² The importance of conversion as an essentially personal phenomenon was a doctrine central to the work of most missionaries in Korea and emphasized by them during the Great Revivals of the early 1900s as a way of blunting the political valence of new Korean converts. This bias had lodged itself in many expressions of the Korean church.⁶³

The social commitment had been an important concern of the Korean church since its inception as well. As discussed in the last chapter, from its beginnings Korean Christianity contained a strong communal dimension and understood salvation in terms that were national rather than individual.⁶⁴ Indeed there continued to be a strong positive response to church sponsored social programs through the 1960s. The Urban Industrial Mission (UIM), which sought to address social injustices and promote the formation of unions in Korean factories, became a strong movement in this decade. The UCC was the first foreign church body to financially support the UIM.⁶⁵ But there were clearly some in Korea for whom the goal of conversion and the experience of individual salvation continued to be important.

Based on Thomas' notes it is clear, at least, that many in the Korean church resisted abandoning the element of conversion in Christian missions. PROK Christians that Thomas met asked the UCC to renew its commitment to evangelism. For some this situation had urgent political dimensions. "South Korea must become Christian quickly [in order to fend off the]

⁶¹ Flatt, *After Evangelicalism*; Robert A. Wright, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

⁶² Wright, *A World Mission*, 233-234.

⁶³ Lee, *Born Again*, 24.

⁶⁴ Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed., *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 18.

⁶⁵ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 75.

communists next door,”⁶⁶ one person told her. Even before the division of the peninsula, there had arisen serious tension between Christians and socialists over questions of how to deal with the Japanese occupation, and what was the most effective path to modernization. To these ends, Christians and Communists had been uneasy partners in prewar Korea. Generally, the two groups, though they shared central commitments, did not mix well and tried to keep away from one another.⁶⁷ There were some who tried to combine both Christianity and Communism, but this was rare.⁶⁸ By the 1930s, Christians often felt threatened by the communists, who were not above confiscating schools and churches.⁶⁹ As most Christians in South Korea were refugees from the North, their view of communism was more than ideological. Korean Christianity had made most of its converts in the northwest area of the country in and around Pyongyang. Following the conclusion of the Pacific War and the occupation of the north by communists, life for Christians became very tenuous. With the Russian occupation and then the imposition of Kim Il Song’s communist regime in the north, persecution of Christians had become severe. Christian connections with the West through missionaries made them suspect to both the Japanese authorities and Communist revolutionaries. Association with a church was enough to get one thrown in jail or executed.⁷⁰ Those who managed to escape the north made up the majority of Christians in the south. They had suffered greatly. Scarred by communism, they genuinely feared it.

For others, the priority of making converts was simply a religious desire to bring the Christian message to the many Koreans who had yet to encounter it. Some complained that even

⁶⁶Hong Kong/Korea notes 1963, Wilna Thomas, Accession # 94.053C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁶⁷ Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945 – 1950*, (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2003), 117.

⁶⁸ Lee, *Born Again*, 61; Lee, *The Wanderer*, 35.

⁶⁹ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom*.

⁷⁰ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom*; Lee, *The Wanderer*; Interview with Dong-Chun Lee, 21 November 2018.

with many missionaries on the field few unbelievers were being reached. Notes from the minutes of the United Work Committee (UWC), an organization in which PROK leaders and UCC missionaries shared responsibility for mission related church programs, indicate that the priority for the Korean church was planting more churches and increasing the number of Christians in Korea.⁷¹ Koreans stressed to Thomas that they were very disturbed by the UCC mission move away from evangelism, which they could not understand.⁷² But Thomas wished to correct the view of the centrality of proselytization to the missionary enterprise. She informed her Korean audiences that the UCC now had a new understanding.

Mission, Thomas insisted, is the essence of the church. However, mission, as the UCC now understood it, was no longer about conversion but service. Or at least, the church had a different understanding of what conversion and evangelism meant. Converting the social order was held in higher importance than seeing individuals profess the Christian faith for the first time. “The Church,” she proclaimed, “must involve itself in all the problems of people: political, economic, educational, family, health.”⁷³ What’s more, mission was not to be understood as the special domain of missionaries. “I dislike very much the fact that there is an organization called the Korea Mission of the United Church of Canada,” Thomas declared, “This was true long ago – overseas churches as part of their mission to the world sent missionaries abroad and became related to these countries in the terms of these missions.... Now we realize that there will be developed effective ways of partnership between the overseas church and the church here for the mission of the whole church.”⁷⁴ For this to be true, she proclaimed, “Your Assembly organization must be your own, supported by your own members so that it becomes your servant

⁷¹ Hong Kong/Korea notes 1963, Wilna Thomas, Accession # 94.053C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Hong Kong/Korea notes 1963, Wilna Thomas, Accession # 94.053C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

and is responsible to you. It seems to me that these days we are called to enter into a partnership of equals before God”⁷⁵ (with “partnership” and “equals” underlined.)

This discursive effort on Thomas’ part can be seen as having its roots in the origins of Christianity itself. From its beginnings, the tensions between peoples of different social, cultural, and gender positions had created real friction among its membership that spanned a number of different geographical locations. Famously, the apostle Paul had declared “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”⁷⁶ Missionaries, who took for granted the privilege of their status as representative of colonial Empires in the 1800s and early 1900s, began to feel the contradictions between the message they were delivering and the reality they were embodying more keenly in the aftermath of WWI, when assumptions of cultural and spiritual superiority were exposed. In the 1930s Canadians began to claim that their churches had moved beyond the view that the people in other countries and from cultures different from their own were in any sense inferior to themselves.⁷⁷ But the fact that Thomas had to make the point again in 1964 reveals that they continued to be stuck in a rut of colonial attitude and behaviour.

The position Thomas articulated was a departure from the colonial era approach to missions. It was based on a reworking of mission policy taking place in UCC headquarters to address issues that had been raised by indigenous church leadership the world over. The UCC had developed this position in consultation with other churches including non-western ones at gatherings of such global ecumenical organizations as the World Council of Churches (WCC).⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Hong Kong/Korea notes 1964, Wilna Thomas, Accession # 94.053C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁶ Galatians 3:28, Bible, New Revised Standard Version.

⁷⁷ Allen Clark to Young People of Canada, 18 May 1931, file 47, box 2, Accession 83.006C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁸ For example see Willem Visser ‘t Hooft, “The Mandate of the Ecumenical Movement: Fourth Assembly of the WCC, Uppsala 1968” in *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, eds. Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (Geneva: WCC Publication, 1997).

However, it is clear that there was a disconnection between the message that Thomas was delivering and the views of the Christian membership on the ground in Korea. The way in which the message was delivered from a privileged westerner to a non-western audience without opportunity for debate belied its progressive rhetoric. Despite its claim to be more mutually respectful in nature, even egalitarian, the top-down delivery reinforced the reality that it was coming from the powerful to the powerless.

There was an element of self-interest concealed in the new policies as well. Shifting the focus from church support and growth to social programs could also justify a withdrawal of financial support from indigenous churches. Accompanying the new theology of partnership was a policy to accelerate the transition to a self-funding, self-governing overseas churches connected to the mission. Liberal churches had felt the prick of accusations against the missionary movement, that it essentially constituted a form of cultural imperialism.⁷⁹ If they got out of the business of making Christians in other countries they could say they had changed their tune. If defunding indigenous churches was a sign of repentance, it also conveniently helped address financial pressures coming from home. Even while withdrawing support, the UCC knew that overseas churches could not afford to maintain the institutions that missionaries had built.⁸⁰ Justifying the move by pointing to a new theology of partnership helped to ease their conscience. It is possible, however, that the shift in approach from evangelism to social service advocated by Thomas in fact deepened colonial attitudes and patterns. As others have noted, “as liberal missionaries became increasingly involved in trying to improve here-and-now conditions for the

⁷⁹ Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (New York: Routledge, 2008). Pg. 247

⁸⁰ Ruth C. Brouwer, "When Missions Became Development: Ironies of 'NGOization' in Mainstream Canadian Churches in the 1960s," *The Canadian Historical Review* 91, no. 4 (2010): 669.

missionized rather than ‘saving’ them for the hereafter, it was they, rather than more narrowly focused proselytizers, who were closer, in practice, to ‘cultural imperialism.’”⁸¹

A Desire for True Friends

If Thomas was promoting a new vision of mission as partnership and chiding the Korean church to ‘get with it,’ the Rt. Revd. Lee Nam Kyoo, former moderator of the PROK, had his own chiding to do vis à vis the attitude and approach of Thomas and the Canadian missionaries. At a meeting of the Study Committee tasked with looking into PROK-missionary relations, he expressed that missionaries had a contrarian attitude towards Korean leadership that showed little acquaintance with the Korean Church situation. What is more, he said, they were misusing their spiritual authority, accusing the PROK leadership of “sin” simply because they disagreed with or could not understand their priorities.⁸² Lee had underlined the word to underscore the seriousness of the term. Tensions between missionaries and PROK leadership in Korea were indeed dangerously high, described by UCC sources as “strained to the point of breaking.”⁸³ In September 1964, the General Assembly of the PROK met and, among other business, received a report by the Study Committee looking into missionary relations. In line with many of Lee Nam Kyoo’s observations, the Study Committee identified that the problems contributing to tensions between missionaries and PROK leadership were connected primarily to the role of missionaries within the governing structure of the PROK, that they wielded too much power and were out of touch with the needs of the Korean church. The aloof posture was epitomized by their use of

⁸¹ Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men*, 7.

⁸² Report submitted by the Very Rev. Lee, Nam Kyoo to the mission work policy study committee 20 February 1963, Box#14, Accession # 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁸³ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 386.

servants such as drivers, cooks and nannies and by the large gated homes in which they lived.⁸⁴ The UCC missionary residence at Seodaemun (the Great West Gate) was a case in point, a huge red-brick structure of Edwardian vintage that dwarfed the humble thatched-roof dwellings in its shadow when it was built.⁸⁵ Koreans may have felt the prick of this social distance in the past, but in the 1960s they were now prepared to say so in no uncertain terms. There were those in the Korean church who felt the report did not go far enough in criticizing the missionaries. Some desired to send the missionaries home.⁸⁶ Others balked at the idea of kicking the missionaries out, but nonetheless desired to see a radical shift in the relationship.

In a letter to the editor in the *Presbyterian News*, a denominational organ of the PROK, the Revd. Chung Yong Chul argued that missionaries and their money should be entirely subject to the will of the General Assembly of the PROK.⁸⁷ The sovereignty and unity of the Korean church body was of the utmost importance for Chung. There should be no hierarchy or parallel structure for missionaries, he explained, and no special parameters placed on the spending of overseas funds besides those set by the Church in Korea. But beyond matters of policy and structure, Chung also touched on the question of attitude. “It is necessary for us to receive help from *friends* (emphasis added),” he said, but “we do not want money given as if it was to charity.” “Charity” had come to represent for Chung and others who had been its recipients an attitude of condescension on the part of the church. It entailed a sense of shame on the part of those who were receiving it. Koreans in the church were keenly aware of the implications of receiving aid for their independence and for their sense of self-worth. They did not want to be

⁸⁴ Salary scale, 1969, file A-232, box 14, accession 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁸⁵ Mission report by Joyce Sasse dated 13 January 1971, File # A-232, Box #10, Accession #83.011C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

⁸⁶ Translation of the Article on Page 8 of the 3rd issue of the *Presbyterian News* by Rev. Chung Yong Chul entitled “Having Read Mission Policy Report”, Box # 14, Accession # 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

treated as children or as people of lesser ability. For Chung, the concept of friends foreclosed the possibility that one party in a relationship would feel inferior. In a friendship, if there was need, help would be given and received without implying a hierarchy of position and without negating anyone's autonomy. If we are dependent and humiliated, said Chung, "it is not good."⁸⁸ Lee Nam Kyoo had said something similar:

Missionaries must not continually travel about prying into our mistakes since this is very upsetting to us. They must try very hard to have an attitude of sympathy and understanding and so develop a *true friendship* between us. (emphasis added)⁸⁹

To what degree were relationships of mutual affection, understanding and trust possible on the uneven social terrain of the mission field? It is hard to say. But we do know that Chung and Lee were not alone among indigenous Christians in lamenting the absence of qualities of friendship in their relations with foreign missionaries.⁹⁰ Wilna Thomas had heard as much in other places.⁹¹ In honest moments of reflection Canadian missionaries would also admit that they had failed at being friends. In 1975, missionary William Scott concluded his extensive reflections on the Canadian Korea mission with the following:

Our missionary mode of life tended to isolate us from close contact with Korean people. We lived, for the most part, in Canadian-style homes, wore Canadian-style clothes, ate North American foods (imported or home grown), and formed a neighbourhood of our own – a community apart. It is true that in our work, in church, school, or hospital, in the city or the country village, we rubbed shoulders with Korean of all classes, but in our off-duty hours, in our homes and social contacts, we tended to keep to our own missionary group. In recreation, where familiarity is encouraged, we seldom missed. Few missionaries learned

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Report submitted by the Very Rev. Lee, Nam Kyoo to the mission work policy study committee Feb. 20, 1963" From Box#14, Accession # 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁹⁰ Andrew Wall's provides this quote from a famous speech delivered 53 years earlier:

"Through all the ages to come the Indian church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labours of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us FRIENDS!"

Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002). 70.

⁹¹ Notebook on Trinidad, 1960, Wilna Thomas fonds, Trinidad notes File #2-1, Accession #94.053C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

Trinidadian church leader Roy Neehall "admitted that there was not a real sense of fellowship between Trinidadians and Canadians. They do not enjoy each other – share their difficulties with each other"

the Korean form of tennis, with soft-ball and lighter racket. Fewer still could play their favourite games of ping-pong or soccer.⁹²

Scott may not have given himself enough credit. Some in Korea vividly remembered the heartfelt farewell Scott delivered at his retirement in 1956, in which he recited, from memory, classical Korean poetry and stirred in the students feelings of courage and awareness of their inheritance and duty as Koreans.⁹³ Others remembered that he coached a boys soccer team.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, there was undeniable truth to the confession. Language remained an important symbol of the relationship as well. There were examples of Canadian missionaries who had achieved a high proficiency in the Korean language. James Scarth Gale, for example, was a gifted translator of texts between Korean and English and interviewee Kim Ik-seon remembers that some (though not all) missionaries stationed in Manchuria were quite comfortable interacting in Korean.⁹⁵ In the 1960s, however, UCC missionaries as a group felt that they had failed to achieve a proficiency that would allow them to work with their Korean colleagues in their own linguistic territory.⁹⁶ For Lee Nam Kyoo and Chung Yong Chul, friendship would only be possible if the missionaries gave up their position of power and privilege within the PROK body. To some degree, this was the vision that Thomas, despite her own paternalistic baggage, was also articulating. But to what degree could she or others from the UCC truly overcome paternalistic attitudes and neo-colonial structures?

Thomas and the UCC Korea Mission continued to struggle with these issues through the 1960s. By 1969, UCC missionary Morley Hammond, insisted that the PROK already had much

⁹² Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 838.

⁹³ Lee Young Min, "A reflection on the history of mission and cooperation of the churches in Canada and Korea", Mission consultation between the UCC and the PROK, 16-18 August 1995, Academy House, Seoul, author's personal collection.

⁹⁴ From a conversation the author had in Korea with a student who had been on Scott's soccer team.

⁹⁵ Interview with Kim Ik-seon, July 2019.

⁹⁶ Romona Underwood to M.D. Taylor, 21 August 1959, box 81-20, Accession # 83.058C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

more say in and control over UCC mission funds and institutions than other Korea churches had in relation to overseas missionary churches. Yet this was clearly not enough. And Hammond admits in his year end report that few concrete solutions had been achieved toward ending the acrimonious debate which had started with “the decision” 8 years earlier. Rather he described progress in the “mood,” sensing a deepening of mutual understanding that might serve as a springboard for material steps in the decade to come. There was, he said,

an atmosphere of mutual expectation for the future, accompanied by conviction and confidence that the shackles of old patterns must and can be broken for mission in the seventies. There remained, then, the business of transforming this mood into practical decision and action.⁹⁷

Conclusion

The 1960s represent an important decade in the history of Canadian missionary activity, when political movements, theological developments, economic realities and postcolonial consciousnesses were challenging the tradition of Canadian missions. It began with a popular uprising that overthrew an unpopular US-backed president and offered South Koreans a new glimpse of national sovereignty. At the same moment, Korean Christians undertook to overthrow the old order of missionary relations with the Korean church. Lingering Korean unhappiness with UCC missionaries’ policies, practices and attitudes were aired and conversations were initiated. Back home the UCC had begun to address some of the issues that Koreans were raising based on mission relationships in Korea and around the world and through global ecumenical organizations that included other churches connected to the historical Missionary Enterprise.

⁹⁷ Accession# 83.011C, Box# 9, File# A-233 Presbyterian Church ROK – General Assembly, dated 1970 (This is an annual report by Morley Hammond enclosed in a mailing to Frank Carey with a letter dated 13 January 1970).

The correspondence of Wilna Thomas offers a valuable glimpse of the complex and contradictory dynamics of the mission field. Thomas was a pioneer for women in the UCC, the first woman to serve as Executive Secretary for Foreign Missions. Her approach to her responsibilities for oversight of UCC missions in Korea and other countries was engaged and she left a number of notebooks recording her conversations with church leadership and ordinary church people. But the colonial legacy of the UCC and Thomas' time in Japan, the former colonial master of Korea, seem to have prejudiced her against the Korean church. What is more, the resistance she received from Korean leadership to the changes she proposed uncovered ongoing patterns of colonialism that lingered behind new UCC policies wrapped in progressive theological language.

“Mutuality” was the new catch word to articulate a sought-after transformed and egalitarian relationship between Missionary and Korean. Koreans, however, tended to express the change they desired in terms of a more common word: “friendship.” Their choice of words did not undergird a policy agenda, but was an echo of a sentiment found on mission fields the world over. The fact that Koreans had to remind Canadian missionaries, as others had done in other places, of the simple desire for respect, comradery and a more equal social position was testimony to the fact that there were still things that had to be worked on in the relationship. The following decade would indeed see meaningful action to resolve the uneven relations between UCC missionaries and PROK Christians in Korea, but not without a crescendo in the debate and increased tensions between PROK leaders and UCC missionaries. The result would eventually be the dissolution of the UCC Korea Mission. The missionaries that remained would, as Chung Yong Chul had suggested, work directly for the Korean church. In addition, all UCC mission property would be transferred to the PROK, included the big house in Seoul. Indeed, the whole

culture of the Canadian Missionary Enterprise was about to change. But these changes did not happen on their own. They were something for which Koreans Christians would have to continue to fight.

CHAPTER 3

Creative Non-Victims:

The Leadership that Brought and End to the UCC Mission Enterprise in Korea, 1970-1974

[Canada] should pay some attention to the Basic Victim Positions. ... The positions are the same whether you are a victimized country, a victimized minority group or a victimized individual.

Position One: To deny the fact that you are a victim.

Position Two: To acknowledge the fact that you are a victim, but to explain this as an act of Fate, the Will of God, ..., or [using] any other large general powerful idea.

Position Three: To acknowledge the fact that you are a victim but to refuse to accept the assumption that the role is inevitable.

Position Four: to be a creative non-victim.¹

In 1972, as Margaret Atwood published her seminal work on Canadian literature, *Survival*, seeking to make sense of the national postcolonial experience, Koreans were also bravely fighting to emerge from out of a history of colonial victimhood. They had suffered at the hands of Japanese imperialist government, from national division by Cold War superpowers, under the military dictatorship of Park Chung Hee and, perhaps more surprisingly, through the colonial attitudes and missionary privilege of the United Church of Canada. There were many in Korea who aspired to embody the position of creative non-victimhood. This was certainly the case of PROK leadership as they negotiated with their UCC benefactors during the first part of the 1970s.

As Atwood reflected in Canada about what it meant to be a former colony and how to regain a sense of dignity and control, members of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) were doing their own thinking. A relatively small denomination created as the

¹ Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A thematic Guide to Canadian literature* (Toronto: Anansi Press, 1972), 35-38.

result of the expulsion of church leaders from the larger Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK), this group of liberal and politically conscious Christians had barely managed to survive as a religious organization. Their expulsion from the PCK was due to a rejection of modern scientific methods of biblical interpretation by conservative leadership and the actions of fundamentalist American missionaries fearful of losing their influence over the Korean church.² The only mission organization to support the new PROK denomination that was created as a result of this Korean church conflict was the UCC Korea Mission. Despite the gratitude PROK members felt for the support of the UCC, there were longstanding negative dynamics in the relationship which, as South Korean society tried to step into the postcolonial era, they could no longer abide. The PROK leadership, therefore, wanted to correct the unhealthy patterns of domination they experienced in the mission relationship. The first angry articulation of this desire in the PROK General Assembly of 1961 came in the form of a blanket refusal to request any more money from the UCC. As the conversation continued, however, it was clear that some outside source of funding was essential for the survival of the PROK. Negotiations proceeded to look at ways Koreans could have more control over the money they received from the UCC.

The UCC Korea Mission's response to PROK demands for more sovereignty were complex. While it agreed in principle that indigenous churches should have more control of their financing, there was also a desire to reduce their own expenditures. UCC membership and its budget in Canada were contracting. The UCC, therefore, was eager to reduce funding to the overseas churches, a move which would force them to become more independent of the Canadian church. But PROK leadership was unhappy that the UCC was making major funding decisions without consulting with them. At the same time there were Canadian missionaries who

² William Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea, 1898-1970s*, revised and expanded by J. Greig McMullin (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2009), 801-815.

were resisting the idea of giving up control of their own mission projects and were digging in their heels. The UCC seemed reluctant to respond to PROK suggestions at first, but eventually agreed to a consultation. The joint statement signed by the two churches in 1974 represented a significant achievement for the PROK, an act of creative non-victimhood, with consequences for the material, political and theological culture of the Canadian missionaries in Korea.

Divisions and Inequality in the Korean Mission Contact Zone

South Koreans in the 1970s knew, as others did who had been exploited under a colonial system, what it meant in post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha's words "to produce, to labor and to create, within a world-system whose major economic impulses and cultural investments are pointed in a direction away from you, your country or your people."³ A number of scholars have painted a persuasive picture of the systems of political and economic hegemony, which directed and limited South Korea's economic and social development during this period. Among these, Korean historian Bruce Cumings has outlined how Korea was among the many Asian nations that America and Britain sought to occupy immediately following the Pacific War. Their fear these Western powers had of communism led them to seek the assistance of defeated Japanese forces to occupy Korea as quickly as possible. From this point the US-Japan alliance foreclosed the possibility of justice or sovereignty for South Koreans, most of whom by the end of the war wanted nothing more to do with Japanese people or their collaborators.⁴ The experience of South Korea since then, including its dictatorships and its rapid economic development, was largely determined by its place within the US hegemony.⁵ Economist Martin Hart-Landsberg

³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), xi.

⁴ Bruce Cumings, *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American East Asian Relations at the End of the Century*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 63.

⁵ Cumings, *Parallax Visions*, 71

found that “South Korea’s economic growth and industrial transformation was largely the result of highly centralized and effective state planning and direction of economic activity,” which succeeded because both the US and Japan wanted it to.⁶ Jang Jip Choi’s chapter “Political Cleavages in South Korea” in Hagen Koo’s edited volume, *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, outlines how the seeds of Korean sovereignty that emerged with the withdrawal of Japan from the peninsula were undermined by the forces of the Cold War, a global hegemony out from under which Koreans are still struggling to emerge.⁷ As the 1960s began to transition into the 1970s, South Koreans began to feel the pressures of those power structures with new intensity. Park Chung Hee’s move to re-establish diplomatic and economic ties with Japan in 1965 had been directed by US reductions in aid and had the effect of bringing South Korea more securely within Japan’s sphere of economic influence.⁸ Many political activists in Korea recognized and lamented the “neocolonial” status of the Republic of Korea and sought to express their unhappiness with the status quo.⁹

Within the overarching sphere of the international political economy the Global Protestant church, through the Missionary Enterprise, had its own political economic order. Although in 1970 Christians were still a small minority in South Korea (Protestants comprised less than 10% of the national population and Catholics less than 3%),¹⁰ their influence on the new nation was disproportionately strong. Beginning with the US occupational government below the 38th parallel, the small but educated Christian population provided important talent for running the

⁶ Martin Hart-Landsberg, *The Rush to Development: Economic Change and Political Struggle in South Korea* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993), 15.

⁷ Jang Jip Choi, “Political Cleavages in South Korea” in *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, ed. Hagen Koo (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

⁸ Hart-Landberg, *The Rush to Development*, 182.

⁹ Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Cornell University Press, 2007), 38.

¹⁰ Kang Incheol. *Jeohang gwa Tuhang – Gunsajeonggwondeul gwa Jonggyo*. (Osan: Hansindaehakgyo Chulpanbu, 2013), 267, 392,

country. Lieutenant General John Hodge, who was head of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) and subsequent governments relied on missionaries for overseas funds and international public support. For this reason, churches in South Korea wielded more influence than their percentage of the Korean population would suggest. American missionaries and the churches they supported would have been particularly influential.

In comparison to American supported Korean churches and missionary organizations, the PROK and the UCC Korea Mission were quite marginal. Both had been impoverished by the division of the peninsula and the Korean War. The PROK was a splinter church created as a result of a fracture of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK), the church polity that had originally formed with missionary support in 1907. The split was the result of a theological dispute over the proper interpretation of scripture. Kim Chai Choon, a professor at Choson Seminary (later Hankuk Graduate School of Theology) had been teaching modern critical methods for understanding biblical texts. Under the influence of fundamentalist American missionaries, the leadership of the PCK expelled Kim Chai Choon and nullified the credentials of all who had graduated from Choson Seminary on the grounds of heresy. This group of “heretics” had, in time, become the PROK and soon after gained the support of the UCC.¹¹ A UCC missionary, William Scott, had also been accused with Kim Chai Choon of heresy and expelled with him and the others from the PCK. UCC officials who came to investigate, though disturbed by the division of the church, found that the fledgling PROK held a theological position in line with their own. Its close connections to Canadian missionaries further helped convince them to align the UCC Korea Mission with the PROK and adopt it as a “daughter church.”

¹¹ William Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea, 1898-1970s*, revised and expanded by J. Greig McMullin (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2009), 785-789.

In terms of institutions, land and endowments, the PROK and UCC were not very robust. The PROK had managed only to hang on to a college for training ministers, the independent Choson seminary. This was its single institution. In terms of membership, it was only a fraction of the PCK in size. In the context of other Korean denominations as well, the PROK was small and, according to interviewee Dong-Chun Seo, many at the time dismissed it as quite unimportant.¹² Similarly, the UCC Korea Mission had also found itself greatly impoverished after the war. The signing of the armistice that ended hostilities between North and South Korea in 1953 had not restored their former mission stations in the northeast. Rather the indefinite continuation of war posture between the two sides meant the UCC Korea Mission had effectively lost all its buildings, schools and hospitals, save for a single house in Seoul, which happened to be the only property in their possession south of the 38th parallel. The rest had to be permanently abandoned in North Korea and Manchuria, where their pre-war mission field had been located.

Although the PROK and UCC Korea mission were both significantly diminished in the post-war environment, their relationship fell within the scope of a typical political economy constituted by the Missionary Enterprise between foreign western missions and indigenous churches. The budgets of each highlight this unevenness. In 1971, the PROK General Assembly passed a program budget of 31,184,017 Won, an equivalent of CAD\$ 82,622.27.¹³ Better than two-thirds of this amount, 20,731,000 Won (CAD\$ 57,586.11), was from the Cooperative Work Grant provided by the UCC. By contrast the UCC's annual budget for the same year was \$33,088,773, almost 400 times greater than its South

¹² Interview with Dong-Chun Suh, November 12 2018

¹³ Letter to Frank Carey from Young Min Lee, dated 28 September 1971, file A-2323, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

Korean partner's.¹⁴ The UCC Korea Mission was receiving more funds from the UCC for its own separate programs and operation than was being provided directly to the PROK. Reporting an operating budget of 24,420,000 Won (CAD\$ 67,833.33) in 1971, the Mission's budget was greater than two-thirds of the budget for the whole PROK General Assembly, the denomination's governing body.¹⁵ Missionaries could use these funds at their own discretion to maintain property, hire help, and cover expenses connected to their work in the field.¹⁶ Another striking comparison can be made using the numbers of UCC and PROK congregations and educational institutions. In 1969, the PROK had 680 affiliated congregations.¹⁷ The UCC yearbook for 1971 counts 4,525 congregations, more than six times as many. The PROK boasted a single post-secondary institution, Hankuk seminary (formerly Choson). The UCC had 13.¹⁸ These figures paint a striking picture of the relative status and power of each institution. In correspondence related to the 1971 PROK budget, Frank Carey, Assistant Secretary to the East Asia Desk of the BWM, stated that the Cooperative Working Grant funds sent from the UCC that year came "with no strings attached."¹⁹ With such a lopsided financial and institutional position, however, it is hard to imagine that the PROK would not be extremely sensitive to UCC actions and attitudes regarding their work.

¹⁴ Year Book 1971, vol.2, 72.

¹⁵ Letter from Fred Bayliss of the Korea Mission UCC to Frank Carey, dated 4 January 1972, file A-232, box 11, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹⁶ The breakdown of expenses is based on a later budget report: UCC Korea Mission 1978 Proposed Budget Summary, file Records of Asia Secretary, box 17, accession 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹⁷ Presbyterian Church ROK – General Assembly, dated 1970, file A-233, box 9, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹⁸ UCC Yearbook 1971, vol. 2, 192ff.

¹⁹ Presbyterian Church ROK – Gen. Assemble, letter to Young Min Lee, dated 15 February 1971, file A-233, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

On an individual basis, the differences in salaries were also quite stark. Missionaries made a minimum full-time salary of 135 percent of Canadian minister's minimum salary plus a housing allowance.²⁰ The UCC pension fund was worth \$53 million.²¹ Korean ministers had no minimum salary and no pension. Some UCC missionaries in Korea at the time were deeply aware of and embarrassed by the discrepancy between their financial position relative to the ordinary Koreans with whom they worked.²² Their feelings were shared by UCC missionary colleagues serving in other parts of the world.²³ Into the 1970s, however, UCC missionaries in Korea still enjoyed the services of Korean drivers, cooks and nannies and lived in compounds consisting of grand western-style homes.²⁴ Cars were a particularly potent symbol of missionary privilege,²⁵ which missionaries in the UCC Korea Mission regarded as "essential."²⁶ Koreans in the PROK felt these material inequalities keenly and there were some in the PROK who truly resented the presence of the missionaries because of the social privilege they projected. They regarded it as a betrayal of the Christian gospel they purported to spread. Some thought this betrayal was grounds upon which to ask them to leave.²⁷

Budget and Property: An Issue of Independence

²⁰ *The Observer*, December 1974, 49.

Minimum fulltime annual salary for UCC clergy in Canada was \$5200 based on study of Year Book 1971, vol. 1 – Statistics for 1970.

²¹ UCC Yearbook 1971, vol. 2, 192ff.

²² "Missionary go home someday, not yet," *The Observer*, December 1974, 49.

²³ DWO Executive March 1975, Appendix G, a letter received from a missionary overseas, April 1975, XXIII. 367, Collection A676 United Church, Saskatchewan Archives, Saskatoon.

²⁴ Salary scale, 1969, file A-232, box 14, accession 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

²⁵ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men: The Changing Missions of Three Professional Women in Asia and Africa, 1902-69* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 24.

²⁶ Letter from Morley Hammond to Frank Carey, dated 13 January 1970, box 9, Accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto; Mission report by Joyce Sasse, dated 13 January 1971, file A-232, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

²⁷ Translation of the Article in the 3rd issue of the Presbyterian News by Rev. Chung Yong Chul entitled "Having Read Mission Policy Report", box 14, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

As it entered the 1970s, UCC membership began to contract and the church began to experience budgetary pressure to reduce its regular grants to overseas churches associated with its missions abroad. The UCC Board of World Mission (BWM) began to speak of “disengagement.” Where Korea was concerned, some on the board thought this could mean simply weaning the PROK off UCC funds by incremental cuts in funding. In a letter to PROK general secretary Lee Young Min in early 1971, Associate Secretary for the BWM, Fran Carey, tipped the Korean church off to the permanent nature of these looming budget cuts. He impressed upon Lee that the UCC was looking to cut funding to all its overseas missions. He suggested that cuts to PROK funding would be “gradual but increasing” so that within 10 years it was expected that the indigenous churches in Korea would be operating independent of UCC money. “In other words,” wrote Carey, “we would hope that the PROK will begin the make plans for the gradual phasing out of financial support[.]”²⁸

This letter lit a small fire under the PROK leadership. The organization moved rapidly and proactively to suggest ways that it could phase out its dependence on the UCC while at the same time guarantee some financial security for its organization into the future. It quickly responded with four proposals for the UCC. The first was an endowment fund equivalent to five times its current annual funding (amounting to CAD\$185,000) to which the UCC would contribute the whole and after which discontinue its regular grants entirely.²⁹ Carey responded to General Secretary Lee with some misgivings about the plan and countered with the suggestion that the BWM might provide half the requested amount (CAD\$92,500) up front and continue annual grant funding at half the present amount for five years after which it would be entirely

²⁸ Letter from Frank Carey to Young Min Lee, dated 15 February 1971, file A-233, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

²⁹ Letter from Young Min Lee to Frank Carey, dated 28 October 1971, file A-233, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

discontinued. He also suggested that the only way to secure the large amount of cash upfront would be through a sale of property held by the UCC Korea Mission in Korea.³⁰

Carey arrived in Korea soon after as part of a planned tour of East Asia late in 1971 and sat down with PROK representatives and UCC missionaries to discuss the proposals from the Korean church. Present from the PROK were PROK General Secretary Lee Young Min, Moderator Cho Hyang Rock, former Canadian scholarship recipient Kang Won Yong, and seven others. Along with Carey, missionaries Fred Bayliss, Walter Beecham, Marion Current, and Willa Kernan were present. The discussion was recorded and translated.³¹ After Moderator Cho Hyang Rock welcomed Carey and opened in prayer, the associate secretary of the BMW was invited to make some remarks. Carey addressed the “changed situation” that necessitated “changes in our relationship.” The Korean church was hungry for more independence and the Canadian church was experiencing budget pressure. He reiterated what he had stated to Lee in his earlier letter, that the UCC was looking for ways to phaseout funding for the running of overseas churches. The goal was “mutuality” in mission, “to make World Mission a reality not just ‘the West to the rest.’”³² After Carey had been thanked for his “refreshing ideas,” Kang Won Yong, a graduate of Emmanuel College in Toronto, pointedly asked Carey to explain how budget decisions made unilaterally by the UCC could be described as “mutual.” His discontent was echoed by the other Korean members who joined in asking for “a top-level consultation” before decisions were made.

³⁰ Letter from Frank Carey to Young Min Lee, dated 11 November 1971, file A-233, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

³¹ Consultation between Leaders of Presbyterian Church ROK, Rev. E.F. Carey and UCC Missionaries, dated 23 November 1971, file A-233, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

³² Ibid.

Before the conversation ended, Moderator Cho raised the issue of missionary property reverting to PROK. This, he said, was a “matter of theology.” There was no need for “Mission Compounds” anymore, he insisted, but the property could be “used for broader mission.” By “Mission Compounds” Cho was referring to the properties on which missionaries lived, usually in large houses with servant help. By stressing that the matter was theological in nature Cho, as the spiritual head of the PROK, appears to have been stressing how deeply this issue touched the membership of the Korean church and threw into question the integrity of the Canadian mission. Though the meeting had been convened to discuss future funding, it was clear that the issue of the material culture of the UCC Korea Mission vis à vis their Korean sisters and brothers was even more important.

By the 1970s the UCC owned properties in three places. The first was in the neighbourhood of the Great Western Gate in Seoul, the one remaining property from the UCC Korea Mission’s pre-war mission. The second was property acquired since the end of the Korean War near the town of Iri in the North Cholla province (roughly 200kms south of Seoul). This property had been purchased in the 1950s with the plan of creating an agricultural education and mission centre. The third place the UCC Korea Mission owned property was in the city of Wonju in Kangwon province (roughly 100km east of Seoul), which had also been recently purchased. (See Appendix) Each of these three property clusters had a missionary residence, but the most conspicuous of these was the large house and collection of other buildings on the compound in the heart of Seoul near the historic site of the Great Western Gate. The big red brick house of this property was on land that had been purchased in 1918. A stately home had been built upon it in 1921 by Dr. J.D. Mansfield. Mansfield had arrived in Korea as a medical missionary of the Canadian Presbyterian mission in 1910, part of the first contingent of

missionaries from the “Western” Presbyterian church in Quebec and Ontario.³³ He served in northeastern Korea and Manchuria until 1917 and then moved down to Seoul to serve at Severance hospital.³⁴ This was not the first house Mansfield had built in Korea. In his first year in the northeast, he had also undertaken to construct a home for himself. A church representative sent to inspect the work of the mission, upon viewing the structure, criticized Mansfield for making it too big and over budget. In a defensive letter sent to church HQ Mansfield conceded “Our houses do loom up bigger than I thought they would[.]”³⁵ He did not seem to have taken the criticism to heart, however. The home he built for himself 9 years later in Seoul surely “loomed” over its neighbourhood as well.³⁶ Later converted into a Mission Training School and Seminary, the living and dining rooms alone had room for about eighty students. Another classroom for forty students, five study rooms, a library and the director’s office also all found room in Mansfield’s converted residence.³⁷

Following Church Union in 1925, Mansfield’s Seoul dwelling became the property of the UCC Korea Mission. Dr. Mansfield used it for one more year until his retirement in 1926. Subsequently, Dr. Stanley Martin, who had served until then as a missionary doctor in Yongjeong, Manchuria, had moved in and lived there until the forced evacuation of missionaries from the peninsula in 1940.³⁸ During the war the house had been used as the private residence of an officer in the Japanese army. This officer had added new residential buildings to the back of

³³ Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 468.

³⁴ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang Anaeseo: Hankuk – Kanadakyohoe Seonkyohyeopnyeok 100junyeon Kinyeommunjip* (Seoul: Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe Chulpan, 1998), 163.

³⁵ T.D. Mansfield to A.E. Armstrong, 21 November 1912, file 9, box 1, accession 79.204C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

³⁶ For an idea of the size of the building a basic floor plan is provided on the following Youtube video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZLeZp2Cy8U>

³⁷ Memorandum dated 13 November 1979 Institute for Mission Education, file 1, box 21, UCLA Collection 358, Los Angeles.

³⁸ Mission Committee – Korea – Minutes, letter from William Scott to Frank Carey, dated 21 December 1970, file A-232, box 9, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

the property. These new buildings along with the original residence reverted to the UCC Mission when the missionaries returned after the Pacific War in 1946.³⁹ Once again they took up residence in the big house. The fact that their missionary colleagues had moved into such a grand home in downtown Seoul, and perhaps also the fact that the buildings were associated with Korea's colonial oppressors, did not sit well with PROK leadership. It was clearly something they felt was wrong. Sensing the urgency of this matter Carey had to agree, "We should do what we can immediately."⁴⁰

But it was not only the material culture of the mission contact zone that Koreans in the PROK were angry about. The political culture was also proving to be problematic. In this regard, the specific issue on the minds of those at the meeting with Carey had to do with the Iri Farm Project. Beginning right after the war, the UCC Korea Mission had begun to purchase tracts of land in the south-west of the peninsula near a town called Iri. By 1963 the UCC's juridical body in Korea had an extensive list of holdings in the area.⁴¹ (see appendix)^{iv} The Iri Farm, as the Project was called, used the land as a place where UCC missionaries worked with Korean farmers to introduce modern farming practices. In a letter to Carey that accompanied the 1970 UCC Korea Mission annual report, Canadian Missionary Morley Hammond had taken some time to update the BMW associate secretary about this ongoing project.⁴²

The Iri Farm amounted to about half of all UCC Korea Mission land holdings in South Korea at the time. Due to an agreement reached in 1969, many UCC programs in Korea had

³⁹ letter from E.J.O. Frazer to Frank Carey 13 January 1971, file A-231, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁰ Consultation between Leaders of Presbyterian Church ROK, Rev. E.F. Carey and UCC Missionaries, dated 23 November 1971, file A-232, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴¹ Document on "The Future of Iri Hillside Farm", file DWO 1974, box 16, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴² Presbyterian Church ROK – General Assembly, letter to Frank Carey from Morley Hammond, dated 13 January 1970, file A-233, box 9, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

already been or were in the process of being transferred to the direct supervision of the PROK.⁴³ The Iri Farm, however, was still being run by two UCC missionaries, lay agriculturalist Clare Findlay and evangelist the Revd. Russell Young. The two did not want to give up their control of the project. In response to pressure by the BWM to allow the farm project to transfer to the PROK, Findlay and Young began to lobby to be exempted from the policy. Their reports took pains to explain their program and argue that its transfer to the PROK would jeopardize its future.⁴⁴ Findlay and his wife, Irene, had arrived in Korea in 1959 and started work in Iri immediately. Part of a UCC's mission policy to appoint more lay people with practical skills rather than theological training, the couple from High River Alberta had experience in agriculture and rural life and were sent to share this expertise with Korean farmers. The Revd. Young and his wife Shirley were from the east, Ontario and Quebec respectively, and trained in theology. Appointed in 1963, they too soon made their way to Iri to work with the Findlays on the farm project. By 1970 both couples and their young families had been in Korea for enough time to feel invested in their work and their environment. Both Findlay and Young felt strongly about the program that they had developed with village farmers in the area.

The approach of Findlay and Young at Iri was not about religious conversion, but very much in line with the new thinking about mission that Wilna Thomas had insisted on ten years earlier when she had visited Korea in 1964 (see previous chapter), an approach that emphasized social development rather than religious conversion. "The essential characteristics of change and improvement must enter into all of life, industry and agriculture," Findlay and Young asserted in their 1970 report.⁴⁵ They pointed to economic, land-use and demographic pressures affecting

⁴³ Letter to Frank Carey from Morley Hammond, dated 13 January 1970, file A-233, box 9, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁴ 1970 Annual Report of the Iri Hillside Farm, file A-231, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

South Korea and rural communities as some of the specific problems they sought to address with a program they felt was a great assistance to rural Koreans. Their focus was on education and they introduced a combination of pig farming and credit unions to willing farmers in three villages.⁴⁶

When pushed to comply with the request to transfer control to the Korean church, the two Canadians, along with their farm board made up of local farmers and Christians loosely associated with the PROK, decided they would rather hand the project off to a local organization called the Union Christian Service Centre (UCSC), which was not affiliated directly with the PROK. That arrangement, they explained, would safeguard the integrity of the program and their own role in it.⁴⁷ Findlay and Young were arguing that a firm missionary hand on the tiller meant better results for disadvantaged Koreans. These two missionaries were strong willed and had a clear vision of what they wanted for their project, but their resistance to requests from the PROK to share more of the leadership seems also to have been motivated by complex factors. They did not trust the PROK leadership. They also had misgivings about the ability of Korean church leaders and ethical integrity of Korean society generally. In a long letter to Carey, Findlay outlined some of his concerns. He complained, without giving examples, that Koreans' plans for the farm were "outlandish:"⁴⁸ "Everyone tries to get into the act, as the saying goes, and then often they bring in their family." He wrote, "Nepotism is a very large and continuing problem of longstanding in the orient generally and in Korea in particular."⁴⁹ Addressing the

⁴⁶ More about this movement can be found at <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/antigonish-movement/>.

⁴⁷ Korea Mission UCC Annual Meeting part III dated 9-10 May 1970 Upper room Meeting Hall of Ewha University, box 9, accession 83,011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁸ "The Future of Iri Hillside Farm", G. Clare Findlay folder, letter from Clare Findlay to Frank Carey, dated 30 April 1969, file DWO 1974, box 16, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

move to transfer responsibility for programs to the indigenous church, he had the following to say:

All foreign missions working today in Korea are feeling the pressure of institutional take-over, or the wish for the transfer of mission properties to denominational holding committees or is it just the plain administrative rights over mission-run programs. Would it help to make sense out of all of this if we realized that the price per acre of land in Korea, at present, often exceeds that of the price of land in this Canada of ours. [sic]⁵⁰

Findlay was suggesting that PROK leadership had only dollar signs in their eyes rather than any genuine commitment to the ministry. This correspondence illustrates a bias similar to that of Wilna Thomas, and, as argued in the previous chapters, it is not surprising to find such colonial attitudes in missionaries formed in the Canadian Protestant church, particularly the UCC.

As Carey corresponded with Findlay and Young trying to work through their concerns, he simultaneously maintained a dialogue with PROK General Secretary Lee about the farm. After a meeting with Lee in 1971 Carey had advised Findlay and Young that no moves to dispose of mission property should be made without consulting the PROK. Both Carey and Lee recognized that the two Canadian missionaries were planning to do just that, but agreed to give the matter some space to breathe rather than apply too much pressure at that time.⁵¹ By the next spring, however, an incident involving Young at a meeting of the Executive of the PROK General Assembly had forced Lee to confront Young directly. "Let me say frankly," he wrote in a letter,

that in connection with your work, there is a lack of communication, and a resultant distrust or fear on both sides.⁵² I personally feel that there should be love and mutual respect. This may perhaps be more important for a missionary than the work or enterprise he is undertaking, for it is through this that we can witness to the Christian gospel of love. What you said in your letter about the present and future of your work might be legitimate, but at the same time, it is most unfortunate that the farm has given the impression, as I have been told by a number of people from the Chun Puk area [the province where the Iri Farm

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Letter to Frank Carey from Young Min Lee, dated 17 June 1971, file A-232, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁵² Letter from Young Min Lee to Russell Young copy for Frank Carey, dated 22 February 1972, file A-232, box 10, accession 83,011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

was located], that yours is a situation “extraterritorial”, and that your work lacks any support from the Church.⁵³

These were the tensions that were stewing when Carey came to meet PROK leadership late in 1971. According to Young Min Lee, it was first the issue of Missionary Compounds (i.e. the apparently grand lifestyle of UCC missionaries), and second, missionary attitudes vis à vis the PROK (i.e. their lack of respect for the Korean church and their unwillingness to relinquish control) that were at top of mind, and that these were even more important than the third issue of funding. But the three were connected and Carey was clearly reluctant to commit to a high-level consultation to resolve these issues on the PROK’s terms. Rather, he insisted, there was a need for more study and correspondence to clarify the issues. Lee, however, pressed for something sooner. The issues, he said, were urgent and needed to be settled by “sitting down together both here and in Canada, sharing our concerns and hopes, and thus coming to meaningful relationships as we work together[.]”⁵⁴ Despite his urgings, the problems festered for another two years before they were addressed.

A year after Carey’s visit, a meeting of the Iri Farm Board of Advisors was held with representation from the PROK executive, the Revd. Kwon Young Min. Present were Young, Findlay, Park Chong Muk, Chun Chang Il, Park In Kyu, and two women, a miss Chung and UCC missionary Marion Pope. Young reported that he had visited Lee and said “there was a basic disagreement” about who was ultimately in a position of authority to make decisions about the future of the farm and its land. Concern was also raised that the PROK did not take its agricultural mission seriously. Pope asked Kwon, “Does the General Assembly and the PROK have any involvement in rural development programs and as it relates to agriculture?” Kwon

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Letter from Young Min Lee to Frank Carey, dated 2 December 1971, file A-232, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

had to admit the PROK executive did not, but that individual members within the PROK did and that the executive did support rural centres financially, including the one to whom Young and Findlay were trying to transfer the Iri Farm Project. But he quickly brought the issue back to the relationship between the missionaries and the indigenous church. At heart it was, for him, an issue of control and of respect. “Our General Assembly has had and still has a relationship with the UCC and because of this we cannot see how you can transfer the farm to another organization,” insisted Kwon, “In the future, if the farm was transferred to another organization the PROK would feel bad.”⁵⁵

By the next year the tension had escalated still further. Despite numerous assurances that Young and Findlay would have an important role in the running of the farm under PROK leadership, neither were willing to accept the change. In a letter to Carey, Findlay again expressed his frustration that the new Division of World Outreach (DWO – successor of the BWM) was giving the PROK point of view “prime preference” and threatened that if the farm came under the control of the PROK, he would quit.⁵⁶ Once again he articulated his low view of the indigenous church leadership, a view partly informed by a perception of rural-urban differences. “If you care to know all the things that I know of PROK policies and dealings,” he wrote, “I will write a very long epistle to you to clarify the situation.” He objected that “the top 3 or 4 people that you are dealing with in Korea are not the PROK” and do not represent “the real PROK,” driving home his point that the leadership was disconnected to the people in the pews. He argued that the PROK was in essence a rural Church and that the needs of this rural constituency were neglected in favour of “the big urban churches which they feel are their show

⁵⁵ Iri Hillside Farm Board of Advisors, dated 24 November 1972, file A-232, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁵⁶ Letter to Frank Carey, dated 28 December 1973, file DWO 1974, box 16, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

cases and their strength.” On this point, Findlay’s concerns ring true. The divide between rural and urban interests in church economies in Canada were also a problem. Korea at this time was undergoing an extremely rapid process of urbanization and people outside the cities were suffering. Findlay, coming from a rural background himself, would have empathized with this resentment and it would be natural for him to want to defend fellow rural folk.

If Findlay’s concerns for the rural Korean church were legitimate, however, a certain prejudice also clearly tainted his correspondence and undermined his argument. He blasted the PROK “hierarchy,” which he pointed out depended on the funds they got from DWO and said they wished simply “to gather in as much capital as possible before you leave them to fend for themselves.” “You must realize,” he continued, “that the United church of Canada has led a long and paternalistic relationship with the [PROK] and this has built up in the minds of all the major minister participants who have enjoyed its benefits, that this is the only role that you have to play.”⁵⁷ Findlay’s comments certainly went to the heart of the matter. Paternalism was at issue. But in dismissing the interests of members of the elected PROK leadership as self-serving, he was deflecting criticism of himself and Young for their own paternalistic and unsympathetic approach to missionary work and their dismissal of both local and national Korean church input. Carey responded to Findlay’s invective by defending the objectivity of the DWO and the legitimacy of the PROK executive leadership as a body elected by the whole PROK membership. He reminded Findlay that a lack of trust had resulted from his own Farm Board’s tendency to ignore the PROK executive. He also announced plans for a consultation, which Lee Young Min and others had sought during his visit two years earlier, a consultation that he hoped

⁵⁷ Ibid.

would deal with the issue of the farm as well as the related issue of UCC Korea Mission property and future funding for the PROK.⁵⁸

The long-awaited consultation took place on 13 and 14 March 1974 in Seoul. On the PROK side, Moderator Lee Joon Mook, General Secretary Lee Young Min, General Assembly Secretary Cho Duck Hyun, President of Hankuk Seminary Kim Chung Choon and former Moderator Cho Hyang Rock attended. All but one had studied at a United Church college in Canada.⁵⁹ On the UCC side, DWO secretary Roy Webster, DWO Assistant Secretary for East Asia Frank Carey and the Revd. Clifford Elliott, a member of the DWO executive, had flown to Korea for the meeting. The agenda included three main topics: “1. A Self-Support Plan for the Present On-going Co-operative Work, 2. New Areas and Special Ministries for Co-operation in the Future, 3. Discussions on Needed Areas, Roles, Orientation and Problems of Missionaries.”

⁶⁰ The agenda was also left open to discuss other matters as they arose.

Under the first topic, the matter of the Iri Farm was to be discussed and matters related to the mission in Korea. Under the second topic, however, some novel areas of discussion were proposed. Items under the heading of “Co-operation for Overseas scholarships and Overseas Missions” signalled an important shift in the mission relationship between the Canadian church and the Korean marked by a proliferation of modes under which Koreans were coming to Canada. One way that Koreans from the Korean church had traditionally made their way to Canada was as scholarship students. This was a long-established practice. The first student Kim Kwan Shik having traveled Toronto (presumably to study in the Presbyterian seminary, Knox

⁵⁸ Letter from Carey to Findlay draft, dated 8 January 1974, file DWO 1974, box 16, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁵⁹ PROK General Assembly, no date file A-233, Box 12, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁶⁰ Proposed Agenda for Discussion on Cooperative Work, no date, file A-233, box 12, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

College) just prior to Church Union.⁶¹ The second, Moon Chai Rin went to Toronto in 1928, to study in the new United Church seminary, Emmanuel College.⁶² The UCC mission had been an early proponent of sending students from Korea abroad. Many of them traveled to Canada and studied theology at a United Church seminary. Others were funded to study theology in the United States. Still others received funding from the UCC to study a non-religious discipline, like medicine or nursing. American missionaries were less inclined to send Koreans abroad.⁶³ They worried that giving them too much of an education would set them apart from their peers, and also that they might pick up troublesome ideas about the value of biblical criticism or the social gospel which would challenge their own fundamentalist agenda among Koreans.⁶⁴ But Koreans valued western education.⁶⁵ Across Asia, the opportunity to study in the west was coveted and encouraged as a way to modernize society and the nation. The UCC and its missionaries were happy to encourage this desire and continued to fund Koreans to study abroad into the 1980s.

The agenda for the 1974 consultation also raised a major new paradigm shift in the relationship: that Koreans travel to Canada as missionaries to the Canadian church. Nine years after the first PROK minister had travelled to Canada to serve a UCC congregation,⁶⁶ both churches had become aware of this possible shift in their relationship. In fact, it was not until 1989 that PROK minister and one-time political prisoner of the Park Chung Hee regime, Yi

⁶¹ D.A. MacDonald to A.E. Armstrong, 23 November 1925, file 2, box 1, Accession 83.006C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁶² Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom*, 109.

⁶³ Moon and Kim, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom*, 111.

⁶⁴ Lak-Geon George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910*, 4th Edition (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1987), 216ff.

⁶⁵ Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 368.

⁶⁶ Sang-Chul Lee and Eric Weingartner, *The Wanderer: The Autobiography of a United Church Moderator* (Winfield, BC: Woodlake Books, 1989).

Kwan-il, was commissioned as a missionary from the PROK to serve the UCC.⁶⁷ He was the first and last to serve in this capacity. But there were what might be regarded as many unofficial missionaries that started travelling from Korea to Canada in the 1960s and who, by 1974, numbered in the thousands. These were Korean Christians who had emigrated as a result of a new migration agreement signed between the Pearson and Park governments. Hundreds of these immigrants ended up in the UCC and among them dozens of trained Korean clergy who served in the UCC in both Korean- and English-speaking congregations. The 1974 consultation was the first time the PROK and DWO had addressed, at an institutional level, the migration of Koreans to Canada and their role in the church there.⁶⁸ This fact gives important transnational context to the church relationship, and points to the fact that the movement of ideas, people and resources was no longer one way.

Under the third topic the PROK idea for a lay training centre was mentioned. The significance of this would become clear immediately following the consultation when, as a result of the agreement reached, the big house in Seoul was transferred to the PROK and became the location of the Mission and Education Center (MEC), ground zero for much of the Christian resistance towards the Park Chung Hee government and incubator for the uniquely Korean “Minjung theology.” The significance of the spinoffs for the discussion of this third priority could probably not have been imagined by the Canadians or the Koreans who proposed it. Minjung theology, which took its inspiration from a Korean idea of an oppressed class, the *minjung*, would contribute to the ideological development of the Democratization Movement in South Korea starting in the late 1970s and continuing into the 1990s. It also had an impact on

⁶⁷ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang Anaeseo: Hankuk – Kanadakyohoe Seonkyohyeopnyeok 100junyeon Kinyeommunjip* (Seoul: Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe Chulpan, 1998), 154.

⁶⁸ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 82.

the global theological discourse of the Christian church. The MEC, which came to be located in Mansfield's huge missionary residence, played an essential role in its development. (The MEC and Minjung theology are both discussed at length in the following chapter.)

The statement that emerged from the consultation "charted a new and significant course" in the relationship between the UCC and the PROK.⁶⁹ It was hoped that the new agreement would "enhance mutual understanding and fellowship" and emphasize "solidarity" through human and financial participation and collaboration.⁷⁰ The delegates agreed that all remaining property held by the UCC Korea Mission would be transferred to the PROK, that all UCC missionaries would come under the direction of and be directly accountable to the PROK staff, and that UCC funding for PROK church institutions would be discontinued. What emerged from the consultation was a fundamentally different relationship than had existed before. Essentially, it evened the social position between missionary and Korean and gave the Korean church considerably more agency and responsibility in the use of church funds. According to former General Secretary of the PROK, the Revd. Kim Sang-geun, the UCC was the first and only foreign mission to take this step in its relationship with a Korean church, folding its mission, putting missionaries under Korean church control and giving over all its assets.⁷¹

The new arrangement affected everyone, but both the *process* leading to the agreement as well as the results were remembered differently by the PROK and the UCC. PROK memory credits its own leadership with forcing the hand of the UCC. Young Min Lee, the PROK account goes, had been invited by the DWO in 1973 to a broad consultation of various global churches with whom the UCC had missionary ties. Lee attended, but to his dismay the issues

⁶⁹ PROK General Assembly, Joint Statement of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and the Division of world Outreach of the United Church of Canada, 1974, file A-233, box 12, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁰ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 80.

⁷¹ Interview with Kim Sang-geun, 5 July 2015.

important to the PROK were not on the agenda. As the consultation approached the close, Lee suddenly interjected in the course of the meeting. The Korean church had granted the UCC trial jurisdiction of land for the Iri Farm Project, but the missionaries were not consulting with the PROK, he said,

In the meantime, the work that these missionaries have been doing is our shared work and they came as partner missionaries to work with us. But changes to their thoughts and policies the general secretary of the denomination knows nothing about. I don't understand this.⁷²

It was this outburst, according to the PROK's account, that embarrassed the DWO and caused it to schedule the bilateral consultation.⁷³

On the UCC side, the events are recorded much differently. Records show that, rather than having been invited to a "consultation" (a gathering that would imply the intention to shape policy) as the PROK account suggests, Lee had come to a regular meeting of the Executive Board of the DWO as a "fraternal delegate" along with three others, a Welsh missionary serving in Haiti, the Vice President of the Lesotho Evangelical Church and Peter Wong of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ.⁷⁴ The minutes record that after individual presentations in the morning, the panel discussion in the afternoon resulted in "lively discussion" but nothing was said of what came of it. Minutes from an earlier meeting indicate that at a meeting with Lee in 1971, Carey had already been persuaded of the need for a consultation with the PROK to resolve the issues described above. One had been planned for the spring of 1973, but had had to be postponed because of political developments connected to the Park regime's arrest of PROK church leaders.⁷⁵

⁷² Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 83.

⁷³ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 83.

⁷⁴ DWO Executive minutes, dated 29 October 1973, pg. 132, file 4, box 1, accession 92.109C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁵ DWO Executive minutes, dated 15 February 1973, pg. 99, 73-49, file 4, box 1, accession 92.109C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

When it came to the results of the 1974 consultation, the PROK remembers it as one of the most significant moments in its institutional history. It viewed the meeting as decisive for the partnership with the UCC and praised the Canadian church for what it saw as a bold move to create a more just relationship. Young Min Lee summed up as follows:

It was an epoch-making occasion for policies of both churches and for the self-support plan of the PROK. Discussions took place in an atmosphere of frankness and cordiality. Ways of discontinuing recurring budget from DWO were agreed upon. The PROK was to receive titles of property held by the DWO. The so-called 'Canadian Mission in Korea' would cease to exist and the PROK would assume the responsibilities of placement of missionary workers, etc. At the same time, the UCC made a suggestion to actualize this kind of policy. It must be said that in those days, the UCC was the first in taking the lead in making suggestions and implementing such policies over other overseas church mission stations in Korea.⁷⁶

Not only did the PROK receive all of the UCC property, they became the effective directors, supervisors and landlords of the UCC missionaries, who were henceforth to be called "overseas mission personnel." Of particular significance for Koreans was the transfer of missionary residences, which they felt brought them into a relationship of intimacy with those whom they previously resented for their apparent privilege. Seeing the Canadians vacate their former residences (such as the "looming" Seodaemun house,) and being allowed to take ownership of and move into them, Koreans experienced a real sense of reconciliation. In fact, Koreans were both surprised and relieved to find that, despite appearances, Canadian missionaries lived humbly even in the grand old compounds. Interviewee Chung Suk Ja, in fact, was moved to tears remembering the frugality of her missionary friend Willa Kernen.⁷⁷ This Korean account is given:

The especially exciting thing was that the house and furniture for DWO missionaries was shared as one family between the two churches with everything

⁷⁶ Lee, Young-Min, "A Reflection on the History of Mission and Cooperation of the Churches in Canada and Korea," 1995 Mission Consultation between the UCC and the PROK, August 16-18, Academy House in Seoul, a document in the personal possession of author.

⁷⁷ Interview with Chung Suk Ja, 15 May 2015.

shared in common and we were shown a glimpse of the simple life that missionaries lived.⁷⁸

For Koreans, this transfer pulled the curtain back on the lives of the missionaries who had been living among them for years, addressed the inequality of UCC material culture, and relieved Koreans of the feeling that their Canadian missionary friends were lording it over them.

The event is remembered as politically significant as well and was credited with allowing the PROK to play a more effective role in the protests against Park's dictatorial regime. According to former General Secretary of the PROK, Kim Sang-geun, the UCC's approach to missions made it possible for the PROK to act independently as they saw the need. Other missionaries and sending churches⁷⁹ tended to require that assets and funds be used in a certain way and that the receiving church tow the line on theological or political issues. This was not the case with the UCC, according to Kim.⁸⁰ Kim's personal assessment is supported by Korean sociologist Kang In-cheol, who speculates that this autonomy was a big reason the PROK was so effective in the democracy movement. The organizational autonomy of the PROK, i.e. the ability to gather people, raise funds and direct activities towards its own goals, seems to have been quite high compared to others⁸¹ and this gave them tools few other groups had to evade the tight grip of government control. But the PROK remembers that the move had important repercussions for the freedom of the UCC as well:

It meant that the PROK was able to demonstrate its own ability, establish its own identity, and take hold of its own domain in the area of missions even without the help or support from outside the nation. From the other side the result was that the UCC could, rather than seeing the PROK as an object of mission work, join with the PROK as a mission partner to

⁷⁸ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 83.

⁷⁹ "Sending church" is a term used in church circles to denote those church organizations, traditionally in the West, who "sent" missionaries to other lands. "Receiving church" is the term used to denote those church denominations who accommodated and worked with the missionaries who were sent.

⁸⁰ Interview with Kim SangGeun, July 5, 2015.

⁸¹ Kang InCheol, *Jeohangwa Tuhang – Gunsajeonggwondeulgwa Jonggyo* (Osan: Hanshindaehakgyo Chulpan, 2013), 159.

work together with the Korean church as it laboured under its own growing mission responsibilities.⁸²

Though this version of events, one which celebrates the UCC, is still preserved in the living memory of many in the PROK, there is not a whisper of it in the Canadian church. The results of the consultation seem not to have been forgotten so much as to have been ignored from the start. UCC membership had supported the UCC Korea Mission for generations, but there is no record that news of the end of that mission and its significance was shared in Canada. This account did not make it into official reports that circulated widely in leadership circles connected to UCC missions. Neither was there acknowledgement of the transfer of the property in church news. In a 1976 account of activities at the missionary house near the Great Western Gate and its transformation into a special training centre for political dissidents, the UCC yearbook reads as follows:

In spite of the difficulties of the times, the [PROK] is committed to an exciting new enterprise. Moving from a sound theological foundation and commitment to social justice, they have sought an effective way to develop a trained laity for mission. In 1975 the General Assembly approved the establishment of a Mission and Education Centre in Seoul... *The United Church of Canada has offered its Sudaimoon(sic) missionary residential property for this Centre.* (emphasis added) In spite of the arrest of its three main staff members in connection to the March 1st statement... the church has indicated its determination to go ahead with the project. (emphasis added)⁸³

Significantly, the report speaks of the UCC offering “*its*” property with no reference to the 1974 consultation or account of the transfer of properties. Technically, the transfer of the Seoul house was delayed by a few years due to the difficulty in establishing UCC ownership (records having been abandoned in North Korea.) But the omission is suggestive of ongoing tensions and paternalistic attitudes. Nowhere in any UCC yearbook or publication was the decision to transfer

⁸² Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 80.

⁸³ UCC Yearbook, 1976, 159.

all UCC Korea Mission property to the PROK or to dissolve the UCC Korea Mission mentioned. On some level it must have been difficult for the UCC to give up its property, not only because it meant the end of a kind of colonial privilege, but also because it had been the focus of generations of Canadian church member fundraising and interest. It is possible that the membership in Canada would not have understood this move, and possibly even resented it. It is possible that the leadership just did not know how to frame the decision in a way that people in the pews could celebrate, let alone understand. One might have thought that the Korean church's praise and clear admiration for this decision and the reconciliation it achieved might have registered in some form back in Canada. But it did not.

Nevertheless, the transfer of property to the PROK marks an important milestone in the UCC-PROK relationship with significant creative consequences for the Korean and Canadian church. For the UCC, the change involved extracting itself from a financial commitment, but also, as the PROK stated, freeing it to support the leadership of Korean Christians, particularly those involved in the Democratization Movement of the 1970s. For UCC missionaries in Korea, the changes had personal implications. The 1974 statement required a shift in attitude to the point that their Korean colleagues not only became their "boss," but also their landlord. It also entailed a much more intimate disclosure of assets to the point that their house and furniture became the property of others. In some cases, their Korean colleagues were touched by the glimpse they were afforded of the simple life that missionaries lived,⁸⁴ but it must have been a frightening step into the unknown all the same for a western church institution with its colonial past to give up its power and position to such a degree and for missionaries, used to being

⁸⁴ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 83.

providers and guardians, to put such basic aspects of their lives in the hands of the cultural “other.”

The story of the transfer of UCC Korea Mission property to the PROK and the dissolution of the UCC Mission failed to register at all in Canada. This can partly be explained by the fact that similar processes were unfolding in other mission fields in Angola, Japan and Trinidad. It can also be explained by the fact that mission work had dropped significantly from the radar in the Canadian church. Once a *raison d’être* for the Canadian denomination and a method by which to attract adherents to the faith, by the 1970s the Missionary Enterprise had become an embarrassment. It could be too, that church leaders feared the giving away of church property would draw criticism rather than praise from the UCC members who had supported the Korean mission to the tune of millions of dollars over generations. It was a teaching moment that was lost on the Canadian church. But regardless of its non-impact in Canada, it did have a significant effect in Korea. For one thing, 1974 marks the end of tensions in the relationship between the PROK and the UCC that had been commanding a lot of energy since 1961. From this point on, documentary evidence of major friction between the PROK and UCC personnel or policy completely disappears, proof that the new arrangement had healed a number of sores that had been festering since the beginning of the Missionary Enterprise. For another thing, the transfer of the property contributed significantly to the political freedom and activism of the PROK. Symbolically, too, it was important. The grand house by the site of the ancient Great Western Gate, symbol *par excellence* of UCC missionary elitism in South Korea, was immediately repopulated with Korean Christian dissidents and became the womb of an indigenous Minjung theology, which served to justify and inspire broad democratic resistance against political and economic hegemony. An indication of the new material and political culture that emerged from

the 1974 agreement is that Lee and Carey began to address each other in correspondence using first names. They had, in effect, become friends. But this is not to say that the UCC and the PROK did not continue to labour at many levels under old colonial attitudes and patterns of behaviour, as will be made clear in following chapters.

The absence in Canada of any record of the impact of the new arrangement with the PROK was clearly an opportunity missed by the UCC leadership to explain to its membership in Canada the impact of mission culture on economic and political inequality. The omission helps to explain how the UCC as a religious institution was failing, despite its progressive policies, to absorb and respond to the salient postcolonial changes that were taking place globally on its mission fields and nationally in the Canadian religious landscape. Was it embarrassment at its missionary past that caused the UCC to turn a blind eye to its overseas missions at precisely the moment when Korean and indigenous Christian leadership on former mission fields were showing it how to navigate the challenges of the new global postcolonial environment? Or was it simply that residual colonial attitudes prevented it from seeing that it had and has something to learn from its non-western counterparts? Answers to these questions can be found by examining the messages that continued to be sent to the Canadian church by Korean Christians, especially those involved in the Democratization Movement (chapters 4 and 5). Other important clues can be gleaned from the experiences of Koreans in the UCC during the same period (chapter 6). But some of these answers were already anticipated by the Revd. Clifford Elliott, a member of the DWO delegation in 1974. The Sunday following his return from the Korean consultation, he preached a sermon on what he had seen and heard in Korea. Above all, he had been impressed by the way Korean Christians were refusing to be victimized by the current political troubles, but rather had “come out fighting for the rights of the oppressed” in a stance that Atwood might have

called “creative non-victimhood.” Elliott likewise challenged his parishioners to think about their own Christian commitment:

We do not have to face open political oppression as the Koreans face. Nevertheless, we know that there are many subtle pressures which intimidate us when we try to be Christians in our world. Perhaps threat of imprisonment is not as great a threat as the temptation to conform in a secular society. Let us beware lest the pillows of apparent freedom silence us even more effectively than the chains of tyranny.⁸⁵

The Canadian church was indeed under pressure and many were beginning to leave. But was this the result of secularism, social change and a comfortable western life, as Elliott and later Canadian church historians have since suggested? Or was an important part of what was tying it down the vestiges of colonialism? The following chapters will seek to show that the latter was indeed a strong force at play.

Conclusion

Margaret Atwood’s reflections on the victim positions served to awake Canadians to their position vis à vis their own history as a colony. They offered encouragement to those who sought to create a new dynamic within Canadian society that would no longer exploit the vulnerable for the sake of the powerful. Atwood’s musing resonated with the global postcolonial reality of the 1970s. What they did not do, however, was to expose the complicated truth that while Canadians had often been victimized as a colony, they were also playing the role of victimizer at home and abroad. The history of the PROK-UCC negotiations during this period provide a clear example of the way Canadians participated in systems that privileged them at the expense of others on the global playing field. The political economy of the Missionary

⁸⁵ Clifford Elliott sermon, dated 17 March 1974, File A-231, Box #12, Accession #83.011C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

Enterprise was woven together with the Anglo-American global hegemony. The PROK's efforts to play the part of creative non-victims in its dealings with the UCC, was inevitably connected to the more general democratic aspirations of the Korean people in the face of a dictatorship aligned with those global powers.

Revd. Russell Young and Clare Findlay quit their work on the Iri Farm Project following the decision of the consultation despite efforts by all parties to convince them to stay and work within the new structure. In an article for a widely distributed UCC church magazine, Young took aim at the political involvement of the church in Korean Democratization Movement as a way of leveling a parting shot at the UCC and PROK leadership who negotiated the transfer of the Iri Farm. "The vast majority of Koreans are content with the present situation," he said referring to the Park dictatorship, "Rightly or wrongly, this is what they want."⁸⁶ On Atwood's prism of victim positions he seemed closer to positions one or two, suggesting there wasn't a problem, or that if there was, it was an inevitable discomfort on the road to the larger goal of progress. Young was comfortable with the status quo and he intuitively connects the connection between changes occurring on the UCC Korean mission field and the postcolonial movement that was building steam in Korea and in other former colonies. Young was not alone in resisting changes that would see Western Christians relinquish control of programs and property to indigenous churches. But other voices had won the day in the PROK in 1974, voices that would now be more focussed on the national and international problems facing their nation.

The 1974 Joint Statement of the UCC and PROK is a unique case, the first of its kind in Korea, in which a progressive decolonizing approach to the missionary relationship prevailed to such a degree.⁸⁷ It is clear that the leadership for that decision came largely from a core group of

⁸⁶ Russell Young, "Food Before Freedom," *the Observer*, December 1974, 36-7.

⁸⁷ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang*, 82.

PROK leaders who were determined to no longer be the victims of missionary attitudes, culture and policies. The impact on the Canadian mission was transformative, completely changing its material culture and political relationship to the Korean church. These changes would help to give voice to a unique Korean Christian perspective with a critical message for the Western church. It would also lead to life changing experiences for individual UCC missionaries. But in Canada, the meaning of these events would barely register. The history of this event speaks both to the liminality and intransigence of colonial world views and practices in Canadian society and religion.

An analysis of the end of missionary enterprises such as the UCC Korea Mission promise insights into changes taking place in Western Protestantism at the end of the 20th century. They also offer a fascinating context within which to understand the changing religious landscapes of Western societies. Not all UCC missions ended the same way. In China and Angola, for example, missionaries had been turned out on their ear by political revolutions, never to return and maintaining only the most tenuous of contact with their former mission fields. In Japan, India and Trinidad, like in Korea, the process was more gradual but the demands of indigenous Christians in these places were different. The differences have much to do with the agency of the indigenous church in different places and little to do with UCC policy. Clearly non-Western Christians, globally, were challenging the status quo represented in the missionary legacy and participating in the postcolonial movements that were at the same time transforming their national polities. But although we see in the case of the UCC and its Korea Mission a willingness to respond to these movements, albeit with a degree of inner conflict, it remains to be seen to what degree church culture in Canada was compelled to respond and how that response

or lack of response would impact its relevancy in an age where Canadians generally were being challenged by Atwood and others to come to terms with the postcolonial victim positions.

CHAPTER 4

Minjung in the Mission House: The Message of Korean Postcolonial Theology for the United Church of Canada, 1970s

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy¹

Homi Bhabha, *Locations of Culture*

Following the agreement reached by the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) and the United Church of Canada (UCC) in March 1974, immediate steps were taken to transfer the large red brick Edwardian missionary house and adjacent buildings in the heart of Seoul to the PROK. As the new Korean owners of the property began to move their things up and in, we can imagine encounters with missionaries on the stairwell as they carried their possessions down and out. In Homi Bhabha's postcolonial theory, stairways, the passages between floors, represent a space of impermanence where dichotomies are challenged and new possibilities emerge. The metaphor suggests a 'liminal' reality, a moment in the passage between more permanent strata, a glimpse of a new, fleeting reality where calcified signifiers like Korean and Canadian, missionary and missionized, colonizer and colonized, become ambiguous and new identities emerge. In the later half of the 1970s, the meeting of Koreans moving in and Canadians moving out of the old mission house represented such a moment. The missionaries were vacating a grand home, a symbol of a colonial past in which they occupied an

¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 5.

elevated status in the Korean church and society. They were transferring to more humble positions from which they understood themselves to play less of a leadership role and more of a supportive one. Koreans were no longer occupying mission compounds as servants, cooks, nannies, and drivers, but were now *maître chez eux* with a new educational, political and cultural vision for their church and nation. This situation was made manifest in the emergence of a new theology, which drew on the resources of the Korean culture and history.

Religion as a cultural phenomenon offers one obvious location where material inequalities can be contested and cultural hybridities emerge. Speaking of the struggles of indigenous peoples within the colonizing structures associated with the missionary enterprise, anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff assert “it is never possible simply to pry apart the cultural from the material in such processes”.² In *Imperial Eyes*, postcolonial historian Mary Louise Pratt gave the example of a letter by an Incan to the King of Spain. The author, de Puma, illustrated his letter with scenes from the Bible set in the Incan cultural context, in effect adopting the Christian stories to challenge the colonizers’ view of history and assumptions about those they had conquered.³ This is not to say that Indigenous people were insincere in their religious beliefs or that those who did identify with the colonizer’s religion did so for purely utilitarian purposes. However, the example does show that religious symbolism served as a means to translate cultural meaning. It is further inferred that de Puma was using the Bible stories to assert a position of equality for the Indigenous community vis a vis the European colonizers. De Puma’s letter goes to show that a cultural process was taking place which would potentially reframe both colonized and colonizer perspectives. In the same way, Korean

² Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 4.

³ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge Press, 1992), 5.

historian Kenneth Wells has argued that it was religion that created an important third space for Koreans to express a subjectivity that was based neither on a rejection nor a wholesale acceptance of foreign influence. Essentially, the adopting Christianity helped Koreans avoid having their culture judged as pre-modern and allowed them to engage some aspects of the modern agenda while rejecting the assumptions of cultural superiority on the part of the colonial powers.⁴ Bhabha's notion of hybridity deepens our appreciation of the cultural symbols deployed in the theology developed by Koreans in the heart of the Democratization Movement of the 1970s and 1980s. It also helps us to appreciate the challenge this theology would have presented to a Canadian approach to Christianity, steeped as it was in a colonial past and western categories.

Minjung theology, as this emergent Korean theology was called, was a globally recognized phenomenon in the late 1970s and earlier 1980s, but quickly faded from attention following the return of democratic elections to South Korea. The theologians who first articulated it are well known to those familiar with Korean church history and contemporary theological movements, but the historical background in which they worked has not been examined closely enough. Few have noted the close association between Minjung theology and the Missionary Enterprise or reflected on what the implications of Minjung theology were for overseas churches with a history of missions, such as the UCC. Korean Christianity, from its origins, struggled to articulate a message of salvation from within the double colonial context of Japanese Imperialism and the Western Missionary Enterprise. Minjung theology, born in the mid-1970s, was a systematic articulation of a postcolonial Christianity in opposition to neocolonial realities. Its message came out of a political movement against the exploitation and oppression of people by the state.

⁴ Kenneth Wells, "The Failings of Success: The Problem of Religious Meaning in Korean Historiography", *Korean Histories*, 1.1, 2009, 4.

Its structure was based not upon a western ecclesiology or colonial hierarchy, but upon the South Korean Democratization Movement. Though it drew from traditional Korean culture and religious thought it was not a “pure” Korean theology nor did it reject modernity. It was a syncretic theology born of hybrid circumstances in a liminal time and space, and its development in the wake of the transfer of mission property and during a pivotal moment of the South Korean Democratization Movement helps us to appreciate the enduring significance of its “liminal” nature.

Encounters on the stairwell

The process of transferring all UCC Korea Mission property to the PROK was the direct result of the agreement reached in the 1974 Consultation between the two churches, an agreement meant to “disengage” the UCC from its funding commitments to the PROK while at the same time providing the Korean denomination with the means to support itself into the future.⁵ Properties transferred included a big red-brick Edwardian home on a lot near the historic site of the Great Western Gate (Seodaemun) along the walls of Korea’s ancient capital city. Legal property records had been lost to the UCC Korea Mission when missionaries were forced to evacuate Korea in the lead up to the Pacific War. At the close of that war these documents remained in the communist-controlled north and permanently out of reach of the Mission.⁶ As a result, legal transfer of the property was complicated by the geopolitical reality and was not resolved until after 1976. Nevertheless, the UCC HQ in Canada had given permission for the

⁵ Presbyterian Church ROK – Gen. Assemble, letter to Young Min Lee, dated 15 February 1971, file A-233, box 10, accession 83.011C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁶ Letter to Minister of Culture and Information Government of Korea from Frank Cary dated 2 September 1976, file 10-2, box 2, accession 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

PROK to use the property⁷ and by the end of 1975, Willa Kernen and Marion Pope who had been living there, had been provided a new apartment owned by the PROK not far from their colleague and friend, Marion Current.⁸ Soon after they moved out, the Seodaemun house was renovated for educational purposes. The description below gives some idea of the size of the building the missionaries had been living in:

The living and dining rooms were changed into a lecture room for about eighty students. Two upstairs bedrooms were combined to make a classroom for about forty students. There are also five rooms for study groups and there is also a library. The upstairs sun-porch is being used as the director's office. There is a small dormitory for about thirty people, and dining facilities for the same number. The latter is a skillful rearrangement of the two-car garage.⁹

A video produced for a Korean television history program provides a diagram and virtual tour of the structure, featuring an enormous kitchen and living room areas.¹⁰

Back in Canada, news of the “exciting new enterprise” in the Seodaemun house was shared in the annual missionary report from Korea. Though the Korean leaders for the enterprise had recently been arrested and sentenced to significant prison sentences for their part in a high-profile protest action (see chapter 5), it was nevertheless anticipated that the program would continue.¹¹ Available evidence suggests that the missionaries only dimly grasped the significance of the future activities in the new mission centre. In fact, it is unlikely the Korean Church leaders could themselves imagine what was about to unfold in the old Canadian mission house. Circumstances were changing fast.

⁷ Transfer of property for the creation of the Mission and Education Centre, letter to Willa Kernen from Frank Carey dated 20 February 1976, file 10, box 2, accession 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁸ Letter from Willa Kernen to Frank Carey, dated 31 January 1976, file 6, box 23, accession 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁹ Institute for Mission Education Memorandum, dated 13 November 1979, file 1, box 21, UCLA Collection 358, Los Angeles.

¹⁰ Viewed 13 September 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZLeZp2Cy8U>

¹¹ UCC Yearbook, 1976, 159.

Theological crux

In 1971, a close brush with electoral defeat had spurred the Park Chung Hee regime to execute a “self-coup” and institute the Yushin Constitution which had, in 1972, eliminated almost all pretense of democracy in South Korea. By this time a few Christian leaders were beginning to translate their alarm at the worsening political situation into action. Among their first significant protests was the 1973 Easter sunrise service on Nam San (South Mountain) in Seoul led by the Reverend Park Hyung Gyu of Seoul First Church, a PROK congregation. At this Easter service, flyers were distributed and placards displayed that read “Politicians Repent,” “The Resurrection of Democracy Is the Liberation of the People,” and “Lord, Show Thy Mercy to the Ignorant King.” The Revd. Park and others involved in the display were arrested and accused of plotting to overthrow the government.¹² The arrest of Park became widely known in Korean Protestant circles and spurred more Christians into action.¹³ As yet, missionaries were not much engaged in political activism.

One of the spin-offs of the Revd. Park Hyung Gyu’s arrest was the formulation of a theological response to the political oppression of the Park Chung Hee dictatorship. A group of theologians met in secret and came up with the “Theological Declaration of Korean Christians,” which was issued on 20 May. The group remained anonymous for fear of the government backlash, but it is now known that Kim Chai Choon, founder of the PROK and independent-minded Korean theologian, was one of their number. The Declaration objected to the Park Chung Hee regime on the grounds that it was destroying the rule of law and governing by the threat of

¹² Wi Jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: a History of Christianity and Politics* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 103.

¹³ Kang, *Christ and Caesar*, 102.

force alone. The theologians championed freedom of conscience, freedom of religious belief and the importance of a truth-telling, independent media. Over against the government's claim to authority, the Declaration appealed to the authority of God over all governments. The document was smuggled out of the country, published in different languages¹⁴ and even featured in the *New York Times* under the title "Manifesto of Korean Christians."¹⁵

The Theological Declaration was released just days into another religio-political event of tremendous importance for South Korea: The Korea 73 Billy Graham Crusade. The Billy Graham Crusade took place in two stages. First, between 16 and 27 May, members of Graham's team fanned out across South Korea to hold advance meetings. Second, on 30 May, Graham himself arrived for the crescendo event, leading a revival meeting in the huge Youido Plaza in Seoul.¹⁶ The 1973 Seoul Crusade hosted the largest crowds of any Billy Graham Crusade that had previously been held. Graham had preached to a gathering of 1,100,000. Lead-up and follow-through meetings across Korea had reached at least a million more.¹⁷ Covering the event for the Billy Graham Crusade, Stephen Wirt told how the Graham team "kept busy night and day" visiting Korean Army and Navy installations as well as other social institutions such as prisons, factories, offices, schools, universities, seminaries and churches.¹⁸ Wirt was overwhelmed by what he regarded as a miracle wrought by the Spirit of God. It seemed to him almost as if he was observing scenes from the Bible transposed onto the modern topography of South Korea:

¹⁴ Kang, *Christ and Caesar*, 101.

¹⁵ "Manifesto of Korean Christians" printed in the *New York Times*, 5 May 1974, file 3, box 79, UCLA Collection 358, Los Angeles.

¹⁶ Timothy S. Lee, *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 94.

¹⁷ Sherwood E. Wirt, "Korea: God's Loving Cup" *Decision*, August 1973, File #1, Box #23, Accession #83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

As people walked across the Han river bridge from Seoul, and across the Yongdungpo bridge from the south, it seemed to be a scene out of Hebrew history. Seeing the crowds of the eight-lane highway, now emptied of vehicular traffic, one could imagine the children of Israel crossing the Red sea (without bridges) in multiplied thousands on their journey from Egypt to Canaan.¹⁹

In addition to divine intervention, Wirt credited “the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the mayor of Seoul and government officials” who “gave warm cooperation” and to the missionaries who had come almost a century earlier without whom “none of those miracles would have been possible[.]” At the conclusion of his address in the Yoido Plaza, Graham had been picked up in a helicopter and whisked away as “hundreds of thousand of arms were lifted and waved in one of the most spectacular farewells of the age.”²⁰

The juxtaposition of biblical and modern Korean imagery in Wirt’s account is striking. Here is an event of profound religious significance taking place within a nation that was rapidly embracing modernity, a throng of the faithful, hands raised to bid the modern-day Moses farewell as he is lifted heavenward in a marvel of aviation technology. While the secularization thesis predicts that religion will decline with the rise of modernity, Evangelical Christians such as Wirt generally did not see a conflict so long as historical-critical tools or scientific theories were not used to question their message of salvation. Lost on Wirt, however, were the deep indigenous roots of what he was witnessing.

Revivals were not unique to Korea, but the unparalleled energy of the South Korean revivals of the 1970s had its own unique source. In terms of numbers alone, the two-week-long South Korean revival had eclipsed Graham’s five-week-long Crusade of 1957 in Madison Square Gardens.²¹ But revivalism in Korea should not be equated with, or simply measured against,

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

Western experiences. Rather, it was something indigenous; the source, in fact, of Korean Protestant Christianity itself; a distinct Christian tradition. Although Korean Protestant congregations and organizations bore denominational identifiers such as “Methodist” or “Presbyterian,” which were adopted from the Western Missionaries and suggested continuity with these Western traditions, Koreans themselves saw a distinct underlying experience which was distinctly theirs and shared among all regardless of denominational signifiers. “Some of you go back to John Calvin, and some of you to John Wesley,” explained one Korean to a Western missionary colleague, “but we can go back no further than 1907 [the first Korean Revival] when we first really knew the Lord Jesus Christ.”²² The 1907 Revival was a paradigmatic event for Korean Protestantism.²³ It initiated many of its unique practices. For many it was the distinct Korean tradition of ecstatic prayer that had shaped their sense of Christianity. Sang Chul Lee, future moderator of the UCC, describes it thus:

For people who have never witnessed a Korean prayer meeting, this may be hard to understand. Korean Christians pray fervently, loudly and at great length. In their prayers they pour out all the concerns that weigh heavily on their hearts, in full expectation that God will listen and respond. During a church service, if the minister asks the people to pray, the whole congregation will pray spontaneously and simultaneously, but not silently. They all voice their concerns in their own words, at the same time, out loud. In a large church such prayer can sound like the roar of ocean waves smashing against the shore during a storm. It can send shivers up and down your spine.²⁴

This experience was not contained within one denominational tradition in Korea. Even those Christians deemed “liberal” because of their involvement in political activism identified with this practice. Christian dissident Lee Oo Chung described a prayer meeting for political activists

²² Samuel Hugh Moffett, *Christians of Korea* (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), 54.

²³ Lee, *Born Again*, 24.

²⁴ Sang-Chul Lee and Eric Weingartner, *The Wanderer: The Autobiography of a United Church Moderator* (Winfield, BC: Woodlake Books, 1989), 39.

with language such as “heaven piercing prayers” and “a feast for a people drunk with the Holy Spirit.”²⁵

But although there was an underlying unity across the spectrum of Korean Christianity that was grounded in an experience of ecstatic prayer and born of the Korean revival of 1907, some were critical of the ways the Billy Graham Crusade and its Evangelical backers in Korea and the US were interpreting and shaping this religious experience in 1973. Writing for a progressive Christian journal, one commentator questioned Graham’s authenticity, pointing out that his stay in Korea had been very short and would not have allowed him to understand the people, their lives or their needs. Nor did Graham’s history of choosing the side of government against movements for social change escape attention: “The government protected the Billy Graham Crusade because they felt it could create a good impression among the public in the United States.” Having followed Graham’s career in the US, the commentator also recognized that “Graham frowned on those who resisted the Vietnam war and was a supporter of Nixon. This is the kind of church minister [dictator] Park [Chung Hee] needs.” By way of contrast, he pointed out, missionaries who had stood up to the Park regime had been thrown out of the country.²⁶ The liberty Park provided to Christians to conduct huge evangelistic events such as the 1973 Billy Graham Crusade did indeed win him the support of a number of influential Korean Christian leaders. Korean evangelist Billy Kim, director of the Korean Campus Crusade for Christ, lobbied informally for the Park regime in the States saying, “In no other country in the world, including the United States, is there more freedom to talk about Jesus Christ than in South Korea.”²⁷

²⁵ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 181.

²⁶ Seok Choong Son, “Political Neutrality” in *Third Day*, no. 66, September 1977 pp.11-17, file 46, box 26, UCLA Special Collection 358 Democracy and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

²⁷ Eric O. Hansen, *Catholic Politics in China and Korea* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1980), 98.

The revivalist tradition in Korea offers an important historical lens through which to appreciate the relationship between Korean Christianity and the Democratization Movement. The advent of the Korean “Great Revival” in 1907 had coincided with moves by Japan to annex Korea, an event of tremendous political drama. Many missionaries at the time, fearful of the latent political potential of the feelings generated by the Great Revival, had been careful to guide Koreans towards the spiritual other-worldly realm of religion and away from the political earthly one. This, however, could not expunge the reality that many of their new converts had turned to Christianity seeking a salvation that was, at least in part, national.²⁸ In later years, as Korean Christians began to feel that missionaries did not share their aspirations for an independent country, the growth of the Christian church sputtered and many began to turn to communism instead.²⁹ Missionaries and Korean Christian leaders had had to take this into account and adjusted their approach as a result. They embraced the idea of Korean independence, though not the revolutionary means to attain it. They also became stronger advocates for those Koreans who had suffered persecution and violence as a result of their call for the end of Japanese colonialism.

By the 1970s, however, the nuanced position of Korean Christianity vis à vis politics generally, and communism specifically, had shifted. Differences between Christians and Communists during and following Japanese colonization had sown deep seeds of distrust and mutual hatred between the two camps. The perceived incommensurability on both sides made it difficult to recognize shared political interests,³⁰ the eradication of economic inequality, the elimination of class distinction, modernization of Korean society and achievement of national independence being four of the most obvious. The experiences of the war and the tales of

²⁸ Timothy S. Lee, *Born Again in Korea: the Rise and Character of Revivalism in (South) Korea, 1885 – 1988*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1996, 56, 136.

²⁹ Lee, *Born Again*, 32.

³⁰ Lee, *Born Again* dissertation, 122.

persecution and atrocities against Christians at the hands of the communists had convinced many that an anti-Communist stance was not political, but simply a logical extension of the Christian faith. The missionary aversion to politics in the early days had also successfully instilled within Korean Protestantism a tendency towards pietism and a sense that religion was more about the hereafter than the here and now.³¹

Graham, as many missionaries had done before him, reinforced the “a-political” stance of Christianity. Denying that they were anti-communist, they claimed that it was the communists who were full of hate. Wirt, for example, reported that Pyongyang Radio, the voice of communism in North Korea, was casting dispersions on the Graham revival meeting. In contrast, he wrote, the Crusade was holding special “prayer services of love” for North Korea.³² There can be no doubt, however, that an underlying theme of the Crusade was anti-communist. This played into the hands of the Park regime who managed to attract the active support of five major denominations representing 22.9% of Protestant Christians at the time. These included the fundamentalist International Council of Christian Churches in Korea (ICCCCK) and Korean Campus Crusade for Christ (KCCC) and the Korean Evangelical Federation (KEF).³³ Many in the Catholic church were on the same page.³⁴ For them, supporting Park was not a political act, but simply a Christian duty. Park’s government was protecting them from the North. And after all, had the Apostle Paul in chapter 13 of his letter to the Romans not instructed Christians to submit to the God-appointed ruler of the land? These views were strikingly similar to those the

³¹ Dean Salter, “The PROK: Living the hard gospel in South Korea,” *Mandate*, Jan/Feb 1984, file 000529, box 15, U of T Special Collection for Human Rights and Democratization in Korea, Toronto.

³² Sherwood E. Wirt, “Korea: God’s Loving Cup” *Decision*, August 1975, File #1, Box #23, Accession #83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

³³ Kang InCheol, *Resistance and Surrender – The Military Regime and Religion* (Osan: HanShin University Press, 2013), 267.

³⁴ Kang, *Resistance and Surrender*, 149.

Protestant missionaries had espoused in attempting a politically “neutral” stance in the face of Japanese colonization.³⁵ It did not occur to Park’s Christian supporters that the programs they ran, such as the National Prayer Breakfast for the President, might be construed as political or indeed that the freedom to be non-political had effectively been removed by Park’s strategy to crush dissent.³⁶ On the contrary, they were persuaded that “when church and government are harmonious through assistance and cooperation, the church will be holy and the state will prosper.”³⁷

The divisions within the Christian community regarding the appropriateness of political protest were serious and did not strictly follow denominational lines. Even the PROK, the denomination most engaged in anti-Park activism, was rent by serious differences.³⁸ The overwhelming success of the Billy Graham Crusade and other revival movements through the 1970s put Christians in the Democratization Movement on the defensive. They came under attack by those who accused them of being foolhardy or of looking for martyrdom.³⁹ And the Park regime, armed with the backing and rhetoric of its Christian supporters, was eager to join the critical voices. Park’s Prime Minister, Kim Chong Pil, who was not a Christian, publicly derided Christians taking a stand against the government and threatened to expel missionaries who supported them, citing Romans chapter 13 and the threat of divine judgement.⁴⁰

³⁵ Lee, *Born Again*, 33.

³⁶ Lee, *Born Again* dissertation, 199.

³⁷ Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea’s Democratization Movement, 1970-1979*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 106.

³⁸ Dean Salter, “The PROK: Living the hard gospel in South Korea,” *Mandate*, Jan/Feb 1984, file #000529, Box #15, U of T Special Collection for Human Rights and Democratization in Korea, Toronto.

³⁹ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea’s Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 269.

⁴⁰ NCKK Statement on recent pronouncements of Korean government leaders regarding Christianity dated 18 November 1974, XXIII. 367, Collection A676 United Church, Saskatchewan Archives, Saskatoon; Foreign Missionaries Involvement in Politics DWO December 1974, XXIII. 367, Collection A676 United Church, Saskatchewan Archives, Saskatoon.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore, one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.⁴¹

The Prime Minister's rhetorical attacks and the admonition of missionary colleagues who disapproved of Christian involvement in the Democratization Movement and who claimed to be apolitical succeeded in dividing both indigenous Christians and missionaries in South Korea.

In response to criticism for their support of political activists, 24 missionaries representing at least eight denominations or orders of the Protestant and Catholic churches in North America, Europe and Australia sought to articulate the reasons for their overtly political stance.⁴² UCC missionary Ian Robb penned a letter on their behalf which sought "to clarify to ourselves and to others the reasons, both personal and theological, on which we base our actions."⁴³ They addressed the interpretation of Romans 13 by stating that although Christians were called to respect the ruling authorities they should also expect those authorities, Christian or not, to abide by notions of justice commensurate with God's law. And when a government claims to be democratic, as Park's was doing, it was surely legitimate to challenge them on those grounds. "In a democracy, the governing authorities are the people themselves," the pro-dissident missionaries reasoned, "and it is improper for any one person or group to assume absolute power."⁴⁴ Then they took aim at the tendency in mission and church circles to see evangelism

⁴¹ Rom. 13:1-5.

⁴² Statement of Position, dated 9 June 1975, File 1 DWO Human Rights, Box #23, Accession #83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

and social activism as two separate things, finding them instead “to be common and inseparable concerns of Christ and the New Testament.” “Christ healed, fed the hungry and ministered to the poor, and at the same time also directly challenged the authorities,” they argued, “We frankly see no way to live in Korea as missionaries attempting to be true to Christ’s example without sharing these concerns for the total life of men.” How far, they asked, were missionaries of any stripe willing to allow the South Korean government to decide what was religious activity and what was political.⁴⁵ Indeed, added one missionary in a separate response, “The government by its attempt to control every facet of Korean society has politicized the entire society. There is no act that now does not have some political significance for one side or the other.”⁴⁶

Missionaries supporting the Democratization Movement faced real pressure from colleagues and the government to cease their collaboration. Two were deported for their activism in support of the political dissidents and labourers. Missionary visas were being extended for shorter periods of time, threatening those who did not refrain from political “meddling” with an early exit from the field.⁴⁷ While the pressure and consequences for Koreans themselves were much more severe, the personal risks taken by missionaries who chose to support them were also considerable. It was understandable, given the potential cost, that many should choose not to get involved. But for some, their connection with people negatively affected by government policies led them to believe that political protest was an inescapable consequence of their religious convictions.

A liminal response

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Foreign Missionaries Involvement in Politics DWO dated December 1974, XXIII. 367, Collection A676 United Church, Saskatchewan Archives, Saskatoon.

⁴⁷ Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses*, 400.

As had occurred for pro-activist missionaries, pressure from the evangelical movement forced Korean Christian dissidents to give a theological rationale for their own actions and sacrifices.⁴⁸ In 1975, the General Assembly of the PROK passed a motion to create the “Mission and Education Centre” (MEC).⁴⁹ This was billed as “a new design for mission” and the directorship of this endeavour was given to Dr. Ahn Byung Mu, a Yongjeong native and German-educated New Testament professor. Ahn was one of eleven Korean university professors who had recently lost their jobs because of pressure from the government.⁵⁰ Suh Nam Dong and Lee Oo Chung, professors of church history and New Testament Greek respectively who had been educated in Canada on UCC scholarships, had also been expelled from their universities. The brothers Moon Ik Hwan and Moon Dong Hwan, sons of Kim Shin Mook and Moon Chai Rin from Yongjeong, Manchuria and former students with Ahn at the UCC mission-run Eun-jin Middle School (see chapter 1), had been dismissed from their positions at Hankuk Seminary at the same time. Suh, Lee and the Moon brothers were to join Ahn in teaching at the MEC. With the passage of time they would come to constitute a “who’s who” of the new movement in Korean theology.”⁵¹

The beginning of the program at the MEC was delayed when all five of the above professors were arrested for defiance of an ordinance against criticism of the government. It was not until 1977, when Ahn was released from prison, that the program could finally get underway. By this time the goals and constituency of the MEC program had become more focussed. A program was designed for students who, like their professors, had been expelled from their

⁴⁸ Chang, *Protest Dialectics*, 106.

⁴⁹ UCC Yearbook, 1976, 159.

⁵⁰ Institute for Mission-Education of The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, June 1979, file 1, box 65, UCLA Collection 358, Los Angeles.

⁵¹ Volker Kuster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion: Korean Minjung Theology Revisited*, (Leiden, Germany: Brill, 2010), 63.

schools, harassed, and forbidden from getting a degree or meaningful work. Some had served prison terms or had been forced into military training. Dong-Chun Seo, who immigrated to Canada to escape such harassment, recalls being dogged by private detectives who did all kinds of “dirty tricks” to make it impossible for him to get work or find a place to stay.⁵² Those who did not have family in the city found it very difficult to pay for room and board let alone school fees,⁵³ but the MEC was able to provide 60 of these students each year with a chance to study, help them get work, house them and support them in their student life.

Most students had already received a viscerally impactful education in political oppression and police brutality. Ahn Byung Mu’s approach was to make these lived experiences foundational in a way that would help students overcome arbitrary social divisions. Lay and clergy students were mixed at the MEC, breaking down a professional/social boundary. The subject matter, too, crossed disciplinary lines. Theology was combined with politics, economics, sociology and feminism. Field work (praxis) in addition to lectures was a required component of curriculum. Though a centre for “mission,” the pedagogy at the MEC was engaged with non-theological disciplines, critical of Western theological traditions and saw no significant divide between Christians and non-Christians.⁵⁴ It also clearly identified with Korean tradition and history, including non-Christian religions. Graduates from the MEC wore the traditional robes and hats of Confucian scholars.⁵⁵ This was a fitting nod to the Korean cultural inheritance that informed their theological education. One wonders whether Ahn and the Moon brothers

⁵² Interview with Seo Dong Chun, 14 November 2018.

⁵³ Institute for Mission Education Memorandum, dated 13 November 1979, file 1, box 21, UCLA Collection 358, Los Angeles.

⁵⁴ Kuster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion*, 63

⁵⁵ PROK News, No.5, 25 April 1978, file 000079, box 2, U of T Collection Human Rights in South Korea, Toronto.

associated the gowns with Kim Yakyeon, the Shilhak scholar who had been a leader of the church community in Yongjeong, Manchuria (see chapter 1).

There were four sections in the program that the students could choose as a focus: 1. Urban Mission, 2. Rural Mission, 3. Mission to Youth and Students, and 4. Mission for Women.⁵⁶ The introduction of a course focussing on women was a novel development for a theology school in Korea at that time. Lee Oo Chung, lecturer at the school had been on the forefront of a number of important women's issues since 1970.⁵⁷ Her course, "Mission for Women," while unique in its focus on women's experiences, nonetheless gives a good example of the kind of pedagogy generally employed at the MEC. The first goal of Lee's course was "[t]o grasp the reality and reasons for the oppression of women" using a process that combined study, field praxis, and special research assignments. There was a strong community component as well where the students lived together for a short period of two or three days and discussed problems related to faith, life and the MEC itself.⁵⁸ It was a program of study that seamlessly combined Christian and secular ideas and engaged in a critique of Christianity and its institutions, a far cry from the days when Western missionaries controlled Christian education and insisted Korean Christians only be taught the Bible.

Ahn Byung Mu, who had conceived of the idea for the school, was well pleased. "We discussed in groups," Ahn recalled,

It was an entirely different way of learning. We gave lectures in the morning and discussed during the afternoon. We concentrated mainly on our situation and asked ourselves what imperialism, colonialism etc. was, where dictatorship came

⁵⁶ Letter from Willa Kernan to Newton Thurber, dated 19 June 1978, file 1, box 65, UCLA Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

⁵⁷ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 139.

⁵⁸ letter from Willa Kernan to Newton Thurber, dated 19 June 1978, file 1, box 65, UCLA Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

from, and so forth. It was a very important period for us as well as for the younger generation. Together we developed new thoughts.⁵⁹

The new thoughts that Ahn referred to were contributing to a new theology that drew its inspiration from the Korean idea of the *minjung*.⁶⁰ This concept was not new or unique to the teachers and students at the MEC. First used in political speeches addressing the peasants and their grievances against the ruling class in the late 19th century, the idea of the *minjung* was articulated later by Korea's first modern historian, Shin Chae-ho in the early 20th century.⁶¹ Shin was the first to write Korean history from the perspective of the *minjok*,⁶² or nation rather than from the perspective of the court elite. He used this concept of the *minjok* to write the history of Korea as a people rather than a dynasty in the way Confucian literari had done in the past.⁶³ But later Shin became disillusioned with the state he had hoped would champion the aspiration of the people and adopted an anarchist stance. In his later thinking he deployed *minjung* to represent a group with a specific allegiance vis à vis Korean politics, the subjects of a new history that would displace Korea's old structures of intellectual, economic and political domination as well as overthrow the Japanese colonial government.⁶⁴

Whereas *minjok* was an East-Asian neologism associated with the rise of nationalism in East Asia and composed of two characters representing “people” and “tribe”,⁶⁵ the concept of *minjung* combined the character for “people” (min) and the character for “masses” (jung). It was

⁵⁹ Kuster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion*, 63

⁶⁰ 民衆 – 민중

⁶¹ Henry H. Em, *The Great Enterprise: Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 111.

⁶² 民族 – 민족

⁶³ Henry H. Em, “*Minjok* as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Sin Ch'eaho's Historiography,” in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*. eds Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Harvard University Asia Center: Cambridge, 1999), 339.

⁶⁴ Em, “*Minjok* as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Sin Ch'eaho's Historiography,” 356.

⁶⁵ Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 171.

a looser, less well-defined designation than *minjok* and sought, in opposition to the concept of *minjok*, to identify a disparate group of people united in their experiences of oppression and desire for a better government. The concept of *minjung*, then, sought to give definition to a group who were united both by an experience of oppression and aspiration to be emancipated. The definition could easily be applied to the first Korean Christians who converted to the new faith out of a sense of desperation at the plight of their country, but it was not conceived as a religious designation. Shin Chae-ho, who first developed the concept, did not have a faith group in mind. Other groups could certainly be included in the definition as well, groups who by virtue of their lower status in the social hierarchy had developed a culture of resistance. Anthropologist Nancy Abelmann described the *minjung* as “not merely a stratum in a divided society or a legacy of oppositional activity,” but as an “imagined horizontal community,” “an indigenous cultural socialism—the grist of a particular historical gaze.”⁶⁶ As the concept was born of the Korean context, it applied specifically to Koreans, but as it developed, it became clear that it need not be limited to an ethnic group any more than it was limited to a religious group. All who suffered and whose life and culture were oriented towards a new horizon of social justice were by definition *minjung*. Though it was never explicitly applied to missionaries who shared in the suffering of Koreans under the Park regime, there is a sense that the ideology was opening the door to their participation in the struggle and to a global identification of postcolonial movements with the Korean Democratization Movement.

The concept found a very special niche in the 1970s and 1980s allowing activists to evoke certain political horizons while avoiding the polarized ideologies of the North’s communism and the South’s anti-communism. In the South, the Park regime had laid claim to *minjok*, a concept

⁶⁶ Nancy Abelmann, *Echoes of the Past, Epics of Dissent: A South Korean Social Movement*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 25.

it interpreted as a people who owed allegiance to the *gukka*,⁶⁷ or state. North Korean communism, on the other hand, deployed the rhetoric of *inmin*⁶⁸, literally “human people,” to refer to the revolutionary proletariat of Marxist theory. Those in the South Korean Democratization Movement who did not wish to align themselves with Park’s right-wing state or with Kim’s communist proletariat began using *minjung* as a way to capture the notion of a people connected to a national identity, but oppressed by the powers above them. The concept gained currency in South Korea through the 1970s and, although “leftist” by Park Chung Hee’s standards,⁶⁹ could credibly deny identification with the communist North. By the 1980s, the Democratization Movement had adopted the nomenclature. Referring now to a Minjung movement, activists managed to gain the support of a wide swath of South Korean society who rejected the binary categories of communist and anti-communist which had stood in the way of democratic progress.⁷⁰

Minjung theology was an important variant of ⁷¹ and contributor to ⁷² Minjung ideology. The first inklings of a Minjung theology came in the form of “The Declaration of Korean Christians” issued in the midst of the Billy Graham Crusade. This statement made use of the term *minjung*, but did not develop its implications. In 1975, two articles in the Korean Christian academic journal *Kidokkyo Sasang* by Suh Nam Dong and Ahn Byung Mu had started to distinguish the concept of *minjung* from *minjok* and to draw on Korean history and culture in an

⁶⁷ 國家- 국가

⁶⁸ 人民 – 인민

⁶⁹ Jang-jip Choi, *Democracy after Democratization: The Korean Experience*, (Stanford: The Walter H. Shorenstein Asia Pacific Research Centre, 2012), 50.

⁷⁰ General Outline of Activities in 1985, file 6, box 42, UCLA Special Collection 358 Democracy and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

⁷¹ Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 171.

⁷² Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics*, 108; Nancy Abelmann, *Echoes of the Past, Epics of Dissent: A South Korean Social Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 23, 34, 37.

effort to carve a space for Christian political dissent in the context of the South Korean dictatorship. It was not until 1979, however, that Minjung theology received its official name. This came about as the result of a conference hosted by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). The papers produced at this conference were collected and published by the National Conference of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) in an edited volume under the title *Minjunggwa Hankukshinhak* (*The Minjung and Korean Theology*).⁷³

Minjung theology, like other liberation theologies of the period, was concerned with the structural evils of capitalism and authoritarian governments and sought to change the social realities in which people lived.⁷⁴ Where it differed from many other brands of liberation theology, however, was in its emphasis on the liberating function of culture.⁷⁵ Whereas Latin American liberation theology was grounded in a Marxist critique of religion,⁷⁶ Minjung theology embraced religious influences, including non-Christian ones, as examples of the *minjung*'s expression of their own historical subjectivity and a means by which they subverted the ruling

⁷³ Committee of Theological Study, NCCCK ed. *Minjung and Korean Theology* (Seoul: Korea Theological Institute, 1982).

Most of this was translated and circulated widely two years later in a English publication entitled *Minjung Theology: People as the Subject of History*.

Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed., *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983). This work was first published in 1981.

⁷⁴ Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, eds., *A History of Korean Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 239.

⁷⁵ James H. Cone, "Preface," *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), xv.

⁷⁶ This is not to say that Latin American liberation theology was anti-religious or anti-Christian. Though critics often accused them of being communists in disguise, Latin American liberation theologians borrowed from Marxist ideas to give expression to a political and religious agenda that was explicitly Christian. In criticizing the established Church, many made use of Marxist theories such as fetishism which explain how religion is distorted so as to distract the people from the excesses and injustices of a capitalist system. Less is made of this critique in Minjung theology which, despite the rise of state sponsored Evangelical Christianity, did not have an established religious institution with which to contend.

elite.⁷⁷ In this, Black theologian James Cone who wrote the Preface to the English publication found a close connection with the experience of Black Christians in the United States.⁷⁸ Minjung theologians embraced what they saw as the Korean Christian tradition of nationalism and its overt political objective to liberate the people from foreign domination.⁷⁹ However, the true agency of this liberation was not to be found in a state governing an ethnically homogenous people, but rather in a movement of the masses united by their culture of resistance to oppression.

Minjung theology also had something to say about the historic influence of missionaries. On one hand, Minjung theologians regarded missionaries as having been a source of salvation to which “Koreans stretched out their hands ... for relief from bondage.”⁸⁰ Contributions of the missionaries to the translation of the Bible into vernacular Korean script, which had empowered the common people, were recognized as particularly important.⁸¹ At the same time, however, Minjung theologians noted that missionaries had often identified themselves with a higher class and were guilty of regarding their interpretations of the Bible as superior. Furthermore, they had pandered to the Korean aristocracy and Japanese imperial authority by discouraging or even forbidding Koreans from applying the Gospel politically.⁸²

⁷⁷ Suh Kwang-sun David, “Korean Theological Development in the 1970s,” *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 50.

⁷⁸ Cone, “Preface,” xv.

⁷⁹ Suh Kwang-sun David, “A Biographical Sketch of an Asian Consultation,” *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 19.

⁸⁰ Suh, “A Biographical Sketch of an Asian Consultation,” 20.

⁸¹ Kim Yong-bok, “Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People,” *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 84.

⁸² Kim, “Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People,” 80-82.

Minjung theology was not only a reaction against the South Korean dictatorship, it was also a critique of Western colonial Christianity, which it saw contributing to the present ills of Korea. In a lecture delivered in Canada shortly before his death, Suh Nam Dong pointed out the limits of the approach he had received at his Canadian alma mater, Emmanuel College.

The language of conventional theology is that of logic, dialectics, and abstract concepts. Its approach is deductive, and its substance is a discourse on the existence of a transcendent God. Conventional theology starts either from the premise that a transcendent God exists or from the written Bible and/or doctrines that are derived from the tradition that has been handed down. Even liberal theology does no more than enhance brain language, and contemporary theology limits itself to reinterpreting existing doctrine.⁸³

For Suh, the culture of the common people and their experience of oppression was what rightly provided theological matter and conveyed spiritual authority. This authority, he argued, stood in opposition to western theological concepts which, rather than being truly liberating, had become an oppressive ideology dressed up in God language.⁸⁴ The concept of “sin” was especially problematic. For Suh, the doctrine of sin was “heavily charged with the bias of the ruling class.” Instead, he proposed the concept of *han*,⁸⁵ a character with special significance in Korean culture. *Han* described a “sticky” experience of resentment and suffering born of a long history of accumulated oppression and suffering. “If one does not hear the sighs of the *han* of the minjung,” Suh contended, “one cannot hear the voice of Christ knocking on our doors.”⁸⁶ To experience liberation, then, it was important that Christians break out of western theological categories that divided the individual from society and Christians from non-Christians. “We Christians tend to think that Jesus Christ alone redeems people and that redemption is only a

⁸³ Suh Nam Dong, “Theology as story-telling: a Counter-theology”, in *CTC Bulletin* Vol. 5 No. 3 – Vol.6 No.1 (Dec. 1984 – April 1985), 6-7.

⁸⁴ Theology of Minjung by Prof. Suh Nam Dong, no date, file 1, box 68, UCLA Collection 358, Los Angeles.

⁸⁵ 恨 – 한

⁸⁶ Suh Nam-dong, “Towards a Theology of Han” in *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 68.

religious act,” he said, “Yet, such acts of redemption have been performed throughout history in every corner of the earth. Redemption was originally a social issue, but was later transferred to the religious world.”⁸⁷ Ahn Byung Mu used a biblical analogy to explain this approach: “We intended to contrast Galilee [where Jesus ministered among the poor and outcasts] with Jerusalem [the seat of religious power] which had monopolized the will of God exclusively for itself.”⁸⁸

Minjung theologians were suspicious of established structures, whether ecclesial or secular. This reflects a socio-political reality in Korea in which no mediating institutions existed to express the will of the people to their government and in which only mass popular uprisings had the power to effect democratic change. Korean political scientist Choi Jang Jip, in *Democracy after Democratization*, asserted that whereas the bourgeois class and bourgeois institutions were the condition for democracy in Europe, the democracy movement itself was the condition for democracy in Korea. The reason for this was that after decades of Japanese colonization followed by autocratic leadership, power had been monopolized by the state. A grassroots movement was the only thing that could fill the power void and provide the foundation upon which Korean democracy would thrive.⁸⁹ Historical developments have seen the persistence of this reality in South Korea as the scholarship of sociologist Kim Sun-Chul has shown.⁹⁰ Social activism and mass protest have remained important vehicles by which South Koreans seek political change. This is witnessed by a number of recent events including the ousting of the South Korean President Park Geun Hye (the daughter of President Park Chung

⁸⁷ Suh, “Theology as story-telling,” 11.

⁸⁸ Letter from Ahn Byung Mu distributed by ecumenical forum in Canada, dated 4 April 1977, file 001563, U of T Special Collection on Human Rights in South Korea, Toronto.

⁸⁹ Choi, *Democracy after Democratization*, 74.

⁹⁰ Sun-Chul Kim, *Democratization and Social Movements in South Korea: Defiant Institutionalization*, (New York: Routledge, 2016).

Hee) in 2016 as the result of “Candlelight Protests” that saw millions of Koreans take to the street in peaceful mass demonstrations.

Minjung theology was a postcolonial expression of Christianity in its rejection of religious and political dichotomies. Its approach focussed on the experiences of people displaced and oppressed by the political economies of dominant power structures. It posed a direct challenge not only to the Park dictatorship, but also to the status quo of the UCC and other Western Christian churches and organizations. Interest in Minjung theology expanded through the 80s to the rest of Asia and to North America and Europe. Cone, mentioned above, clearly recognized that Minjung theology shared with other theologies of the poor a “rejection of European theology and their affirmation of their own cultural history as a primary source for doing of theology.”⁹¹ Cone also recognized Minjung theology’s uniqueness and the centrality of the Korean story for understanding it.⁹² But others raised objections. World renowned German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, for example, suspected that the minjung had displaced Christ at the centre of Christian belief.⁹³ Others dismissed Minjung theology as being just another variety of liberation theology, whose methodology many discredited as being Marxist. It can be argued, however, that these objections simply showed that Western churches and theologians were not prepared to listen to a message critiquing its colonial past and its privileged place on top of the world religious order. Postcolonial feminist theologian Kwok Pui Lan has astutely noted that “the creation of a new narrative discourse of Christianity through the use of Asian idioms and stories” is only acceptable in Western Christian circles “if it does not self-consciously challenge

⁹¹ Cone, “Preface,” x.

⁹² Cone, “Preface,” xiv.

⁹³ Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 258-9.

imperialistic impulses.”⁹⁴ The full-on critique of those impulses found in Minjung theology constitutes a “theoretical challenge coming from the contact zone” and, according to Kwok, far from having been addressed by the Western church, at present continues to generate hostility between Asians and Westerners.⁹⁵ The above does not negate the radically social sensibility of such Western Christian traditions as the Social Gospel or the Civil Rights movements but it does highlights the ways in with colonial history and biases informed and continue to inform relationships between White and non-White Christians.

Canadians in the liminal space

In an address to Hankuk Seminary in 1978, Douglas Jay, member of the UCC’s Commission on World Mission and a leading Canadian theologian, acknowledged that some in the West feared liberation theologies. He did not attempt to analyze or explain why this was so, but stressed that all theologies were rightly conditioned by their contexts. “[W]hat is true or appropriate for Canada may not be fully translatable to the Korean context, and vice versa,” he said, but “here is where we need each other; ... it often takes others in the Christian family to help us see that our particular expression of the Christian faith is not absolute, not universally valid.” Jay’s insights reflect a postcolonial movement towards the contextualization of knowledge. Clearly challenged by the new theology, as a Canadian theologian he was compelled to recognize that his own understanding of the Korean Christian faith and experience was limited, and that the Korean expression was no less valid than his own.

⁹⁴ Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 43.

⁹⁵ Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology*, 43.

Ecumenical dialogue, Jay professed, was “extremely important not only to help us find ‘the truth’ but also the truth about ourselves.”⁹⁶ Many of the UCC’s missionaries on the ground in Korea had found “the truth about themselves” in the course of their support of Korean democracy activists and they were profoundly impacted by their close association with the Minjung theologians at the Seodaemun-missionary-compound-turned-MEC. These experiences shed light on their social context, not only in Korea but in Canada as well. They challenged colonial assumptions that had clearly shaped Canadian society and continued to disadvantage some to the benefit of others. Marion Current testified that involvement in political activism had changed her life in this way:

Growing up in Northeastern Ontario, I was too naive to wonder why the English-speaking minority held the power even though French speaking Canadians were in the majority there. I grew up never knowing any aboriginal, native Canadians, although many lived in the area. In Korea, in retrospect, I realised that I had been completely brainwashed by the dominant culture. It never occurred to me to ask why the society was so skewed in favour of white Protestant Catholic English speakers. I was unaware of my prejudice, and it took quite a bit to change my attitude.... What finally woke me up was the conscientization I received at the hands of the Korean human rights activists.⁹⁷

It was unusual for missionaries to describe their work on the mission field in such terms. It speaks to the impact of the Democratization Movement and its articulation of a new political horizon in Minjung theology that someone like Marion Current could be affected in this way.

Jay’s comments and Current’s experience notwithstanding, there is little evidence that theologians in Canada seriously engaged with Minjung theology. UCC observers of the Korean church were more interested in superficial aspects of Korean Christianity that reinforced nostalgia of a thriving Canadian church. In the latter part of 1983, UCC journalist Dean Salter

⁹⁶ Suffering and Hope an address to Hankuk theological seminary by Douglas Jay, dated 28 September 1978, file 002011, box 58, U of T Collection on Democratization and Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

⁹⁷ Stentzel, *More Than Witnesses*, 396.

travelled to South Korea to report back on the Korean church. He visited and worshipped with a number of congregations and reported two main points about this experience for UCC readers. First, he noticed how western it was. He accounted for this by the fact that Korea was one of the most “missionized” countries in the world. Second, he reported an energy in worship that seemed to be missing in Canada. The pews, the pulpit, the choir, the communion table, the baptismal font many of the hymns, and the order of worship in Korean churches would be familiar to Canadian church people, he said. However, he asserted, there was a power, a joy and a fiery spirit in Korean worship which is clearly unique to the people and very exciting to the visitor.⁹⁸ He did not make the connection, as Cone had done, to the liberatory dimension of Christianity for Black Christians in America and Africa whose worship was likewise noted for its energy.

For Salter, it was this “energy,” an excitement about worship which was also translating into church growth, that was the defining character of what he dubbed “Christianity Korean-style.”⁹⁹ Salter’s apparent equation was: Western roots + Korean energy = vibrant church. It is not surprising that energy and growth would attract the Canadian gaze. The church back home was shrinking. Salter did speak to Suh Nam Dong about minjung theology from which he came to understand that “Minjung theology is a distinctly Asian theology which connects people directly to their God... The rulers are not subjects of God’s history; the people are.”¹⁰⁰ And he did attend a number of churches that were less Western in form. These he described in some detail. However, it was the energy and church growth that made the strongest impression. The

⁹⁸ Dean Salter, “The Church in Mission: A Canadian Looks at the Korean Church,” *Mission Magazine*, Vol. 8, No. 1, *South Korea: Challenge and Celebration* (pre-September) 1984.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

sense that something radically new and relevant to the Canadian context was taking place in Korea seems to have been lost.

UCC historians have shown that the 1970s and 1980s were a period when the United Church leadership was particularly attuned to global issues of political and ecumenical justice and that it offered “radical support” to justice movements at home and around the world. Christian ethicist Roger Hutchinson, for example, has chronicled the work of Canadian churches on the issue of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and their contribution to the Berger report¹⁰¹ while Canadian religious scholar Renate Pratt has shown the pivotal role that Canadian churches, including the UCC, played in addressing Apartheid in South Africa.¹⁰² Some have also noted that there was little engagement with these issues by the general membership.¹⁰³ Ecumenical Coalitions formed and liberation theologies were discussed, but this took place “at arm’s length” from the congregations and were “largely unknown to the people in the pews.”¹⁰⁴ At a institutional level there was an effort to come to terms with structural racism, especially with regards to indigenous people, but at a cultural level the membership of the UCC did not connect with postcolonial movements or respond to their call for radical transformation.¹⁰⁵ Korean mission history offers a case in point. In Korea, a handful of missionaries did experience radical, personal change, the mission enterprise ceased to exist, and new indigenous expressions of Christianity began to offer sophisticated postcolonial critiques of the Western church. But back in Canada, no similar movement by the church at the time was forcefully confronting Canadian

¹⁰¹ Roger Hutchinson, *Prophets, Pastors and Public Choices: Canadian Churches and the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Debate* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1992).

¹⁰² Renate Pratt, *In Good Faith: Canadian Churches Against Apartheid* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1997).

¹⁰³ Joan Wyatt, “The 1970s: Voices from the Margins” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, Donald Schweitzer, ed. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 126-7.

¹⁰⁴ Wyatt, “The 1970s,” 128.

¹⁰⁵ Wyatt, “The 1970s,” 133.

society and established religion with postcolonial issues to the same degree. While the Social Gospel tradition has prophetically overturned some political tables in its day and the American Civil Rights movements had likewise marshalled Christian stories to propel its opposition to the vested powers, Canadian missionaries in 1970s were being shunned and their work neglected because of its association with a colonial past. At the very same time, however, many of these same missionaries were starting to be able to articulate what they had been learning from their relationships with the indigenous churches and how they were being dramatically changed by their experiences in these contexts. Ironically, unlike the missionaries, those in Canada who pointed the finger of judgement at them remained blind to the implications of postcolonial Christianity for themselves and their congregations. Regardless, the fact that UCC congregations were barely being impacted at a cultural level does not erase the significance of Minjung theology as a liminal moment of postcolonial hybridity, a moment in which the UCC participated, both directly through its missionary personnel and indirectly through the one-time missionary house near the site of the ancient western entrance to Korea's historic capital city.

Conclusion

In the last year of his life, Minjung theologian Suh Nam Dong was conferred an honorary doctorate at his alma mater, the UCC's Emmanuel College in Toronto, and was invited to take up a temporary teaching post there for a term. He traveled to Toronto to accept the degree, but felt that he should turn down the teaching position because his work at the MEC was too urgent. "As you know," Suh wrote to Asia Desk secretary of the UCC's Division of World Outreach, Frank Carey, "this is an underground activity, these students have no other place they can study and

cannot secure employment; Our Institute [the MEC] is the only place which offers them their education. If I'm absent for a semester, it will be very difficult to continue this course.”¹⁰⁶

Since 1982, the government had become aware of the program and ordered it discontinued,¹⁰⁷ but Suh had managed to keep it going secretly with 20 seminarians still enrolled. Officially it had reverted to lay training programs and continuing education for clergy.¹⁰⁸ Suh died suddenly of liver cancer upon his return to Korea from his visit to Canada. He was 66 years old. It is unclear how much longer the underground seminary managed to continue, but the MEC survives to this day in the same Edwardian building, a piece of Canada in the centre of Seoul.

Suh's death came at the highwater mark for Minjung theology with the Christian Council of Asia's 1983 English republication of the *Minjung Theology* and Jürgen Moltmann's 1984 edited volume in German *Minjung Theologie des Volkes Gottes in Sud-korea*,¹⁰⁹ stimulating discussion around the world. It was a moment of fame that did not last long. Just as the Korean Christian role in the Democratization Movement had been critical in the late 1970s, but was soon overshadowed by a much broader participation by Korea society,¹¹⁰ Minjung theology's prominence on the global theological scene was also short lived.¹¹¹ Its rise corresponded to a brief moment in Asia when the Christian church was at the centre of a struggle for democracy and for the rights of Asian peoples to direct their own histories, in a liminal period when Korean Christians and UCC missionaries were transitioning from a modernist history of missionary

¹⁰⁶ Letter to Frank Carey from Suh Nam Dong re invitation to teach at Emmanuel College, 1983, file 6, accession 91.169C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹⁰⁷ PROK News no. 14, dated 20 July 1981, file 000087, U of T Special Collection of Human Rights in South Korea, Toronto.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *Minjung Theologies des Volkes Gottes in Sud-korea* (Neukirchen, 1984).

¹¹⁰ Chang, *Protest Dialectics*, 108.

¹¹¹ The National Council of Churches in Korea, *Christianity in Korea: Historical Moments of Protestant Churches* (Seoul: The National Council of Churches in Korea, 2013), 273.

enterprise to a postmodern one of global Christianity. But the fleeting nature of this theological phenomenon belies the lingering relevance of the questions it raised about western political hegemony in general and the colonial roots of the Canadian church in particular. “Christendom,” Suh insisted, “had to collapse and enter the universal Oikoumene in the post-Christian era, especially in the third world.”¹¹² As the Canadian church entered its second decade of increasingly steep numerical decline, these words help to make sense of its new position vis à vis postcolonial Canadian society.

The transfer of the Seodaemun property from the UCC to the PROK and the development of Minjung theology within it thus had material, political, cultural and theological significance. But it is fair to question the extent to which it had a discernable impact on the UCC beyond changing the lives of a handful of missionaries involved with Korean Christian activists. It is true that the ideas that emerged from the MEC did manage to attract considerable attention in Canada and in other parts of the western world. They were covered in popular Christian magazines, in seminary classrooms, in doctoral dissertations, in public lectures, in books on theology and in denominational publications through the 80s and 90s. Generally speaking, the church in Canada was interested in the vital energy of Korean Christianity. There is little evidence, however, that it engaged meaningfully with its message for the church in a post-colonial era. Perhaps this is because it regarded Minjung theology as something by Koreans for Koreans. This would only be half the truth, however, for it had emerged from an encounter on the liminal stairwell of a Canadian house in the heart of Seoul. Drawing on an evolving Korean Christian tradition in conversation with their missionary colleagues, Korean theologians opened a new postcolonial horizon of enduring significance, not least of all for the Canadian church.

¹¹² Theology of Minjung by Prof. Suh Nam Dong, no date, File 1, Box 68, UCLA Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

CHAPTER 5

Sarangbang:

How Women Hosting Women Transformed UCC Missionaries and the United Church of Canada

The Bible women carried the Christian message into the homes of the women. They went from house to house and village to village, contacting women in their private quarters (*sarang*). Initially, only women missionaries and Bible women could directly contact women – Korean custom did not permit males to contact women, except their immediate family: father, brothers or husband. Because of their isolation, families were not converted until the matriarch was converted. Most women in Korea, until the coming of the Christians, could not read or write.¹

Early Canadian missionaries knew that the “*sarang*,” otherwise known as “*sarangchae*” or “*sarangbang*,” were gendered spaces essential to their work. They felt the practice of women hosting women was not only important to the transmission of Christianity, but also to the education of women and by extension the modernization of Korea. Post-war Korea saw the replacement of traditional homes with modern apartment complexes but the gendered space of the *sarangbang* survived for female missionaries and their Korean hosts. The archival record reveals that Korean women continued to grant female missionaries special access to their lives well into the post-war period. This chapter will explore the ways that, in the 1970s and 1980s, the practice of women hosting women continued to be radically transformative, drawing women into dramatic struggles for justice and teaching them lessons about themselves and the cultural other. Personal correspondence, official reports, personal notes, publications and interviews left by four Canadian women provide the data for this exploration. In a surprising twist, this material describes the transformational impact of the *sarangbang* space, not on Korean women and society, but rather on the Canadian women and their church back home. In these modern

¹ William Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea, 1898-1970s*, revised and expanded by J. Greig McMullin (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2009), 498.

sarangbang, female missionaries, and later other women of the UCC, were invited into activities that involved risk to their safety, livelihoods and life-long relationships, but also provided catalysts for change vis à vis the structures of power governing Korea, the globe and their home church.

Sarangbang not only provided the space within which Canadian women were changed, they are also the reason that female UCC missionaries were drawn into the events of the Democratization Movement in a different way and to a greater degree than male missionaries. This chapter will use the concept of *sarangbang* to conjure an transformative third space, often but not always a room or home, which was made available by and for women, including UCC women missionaries and played a role in a postcolonial movement for Korean democracy and national sovereignty. The concept of the *sarangbang*, like the contact zone or third space, provides this chapter with an important lens through which to view the history of missions in Korea. It further highlights a unique aspect of gendered cross-cultural encounters on the mission field and will suggest that, as a female dominated space in a patriarchal world, it served to empower women by leveraging intercultural resources and transnational relationships to effect social and political change.

This chapter will describe the nature and effectiveness of the *sarangbang* space through three critical incidents in the South Korean democracy movement: the destruction of the Imun Dong squatter village on 9 February of 1976, the Declaration for National Salvation of 1 March 1976 and the Kwangju Massacre of May 1980. In addition to providing a description of the *sarangbang*, each of these sections also provide previously unpublished accounts of the pivotal role women played in these events. But first, let us briefly explore the *sarangbang* as a third-space in the light of postcolonial theory.

The *Sarangbang* as “third space”

Dr. Florence Murray,² a Canadian missionary, recounts in her memoir how before being expelled from Korea in 1942 she was placed under house arrest by the Japanese authorities. Late one night she was surprised by a Korean female colleague who let herself into the house in the dark of night and slipped under the bed covers with her.³ This act was repeated in the nights to follow. As Japanese police were known to visit the homes of suspects at night, Murray’s Korean colleague had joined her hoping that, should the police invade Murray’s home, the presence of another person would offer some protection for the missionary doctor. The action of the Korean woman was a gesture of solidarity and concern for her friend. Had the police arrived to find her there, however, it would have cost her dearly. This act was a demonstration of tremendous courage and intimacy. It represented a remarkable shift in social positions for Murray, who was used to thinking of herself as someone who helped Koreans, not vice versa, and who personally commanded distance in her professional relationships. When she was reunited with her friend in South Korea following the trauma of the Pacific and Korean wars, there was evidence of a different relationship between them than what had existed in the north prior to their separation. Murray, it seems, felt more comfortable hosting and socializing with Korean friends. The change might not only have been due to the shared experienced described above. Post-war Korea was different from the Korea Murray had encountered when she first arrived in 1912. It had been transformed by more than a generation of colonization and a program of

² Murray was UCC mission doctor who served in northeastern Korea and Manchuria from 1921 to 1942 and returned to South Korea following the Pacific and Korean wars to continue her work until 1975.

³ Florence Murray, *At the Foot of Dragon Hill: The Story of a Surgeon’s Two Decades in Manchuria and Korea, and the Challenges She Faced as a Woman Doctor in a Culture So Primitive its Women Were Not Even Considered Worthy of Having Names* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1975), 232.

modernization, which had included an elevation in the educational levels of many men and women. In this context, friendships between Koreans and educated westerners were easier.⁴ Nevertheless, intimate spaces shared by Korean women and non-Korean women played an important role in contributing to this transformation and continued to do so as Korea struggled to assert its sovereignty in a neocolonial world.

Postcolonial theoretician Homi Bhabha describes a “third space” occupied by women in the British Miners’ strike of 1984-5. According to Bhabha, this space was neither wholly defined by a feminist agenda, nor subsumed by their labour commitments, but was a “hybrid” position which sought to advance and negotiate both, while at the same time envisioning something more. “Here,” wrote Bhabha, “the transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are neither the One (unitary working class) nor the Other (the politics of gender) but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both.”⁵ Bhabha’s theory gives us a framework to understand the goals and activities of women as gendered subjects in pre- and postwar Korea. Lee Oo Chung, a Korean Christian activist, scholar, and second-wave feminist leader who features prominently in one of the stories below, asserted that “the transformation of Korean society is the most important premise for achieving women’s liberation.” Thus, “the objective of the women’s movement is to work for democratization and autonomy of Korean society and women’s liberation.”⁶ Lee understood that women closely identified with the movement to restore democracy and reassert Korean sovereignty but also that, as feminists, there was a need to work “separately” such that the new

⁴ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern Women Modernizing Men: The Changing Missions of Three Professional Women in Asia and Africa, 1902-69* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 25.

⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 41.

⁶ Seung-Kyung Kim, *The Korean Women’s Movement and the State: Bargaining for Change*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 30.

national horizon would be shaped by women's own aspirations.⁷ A song sung by women in the labour movement demonstrates women's commitment to wider labour and unification movements while at the same time claiming their own experiences and setting their own priorities:

Take your child on you back, shake off your grief and rise, even though we can
die we cannot fail.
Together with comrades in the bloody struggle, penetrate the thorny path
Broken-back peninsula, divided land, you are our mother.
We will absolutely win and Minjung will dance, women's liberation, worker's
liberation.
With our hands we'll unify the nation, women workers, Mansei!!!⁸

For Christian women in the Democratization Movement, the extra dimension of their religious commitments further contributed to the complexity of the "third space." In terms of theology, there was very little published by or about women, but certain concepts developed by Minjung theologians became important. Christian women in the labour movement, for example, appreciated the association Minjung theologians made between "*han*- 恨," a distinctly Korean experience of historical suffering and oppression, and their own contemporary experiences as women and exploited labourers. Through the Christian Council of Churches (CCA) a group of women published a booklet in 1982 entitled "From the Womb of Han."⁹ "The women workers movement is not a 'side issue'," the booklet insisted, "but is the focal point of democratic movement in South Korea." The experience of *han* understood through the Christian lens was, it further asserted, at the heart of their engagement with democratization and labour rights. These reflections on the concept of *han* notwithstanding, the best insights into the way women

⁷ Seung-Kyung Kim, *The Korean Women's Movement and the State: Bargaining for Change*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 30.

⁸ Yeoseong Nodong Haebangga (Women Worker Liberation Song) dated 1988, File 5, Box 72, UCLA Archives Special Collection 358, Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

⁹ Christian Conference of Asia – Urban Rural Mission, *From the Womb of Han: Stories of Korean Women Workers* (Hong Kong: CCA-URM, 1982).

understood their Christian commitments in the context of the Korean Democratization Movement are found in the record of their activities. As mentioned above, some of these activities had their genesis in or around intimate personal spaces: homes, makeshift churches, private women-only encounters, and secret gatherings in female controlled spaces.

From their arrival in the late 1800s, Canadian missionaries had put an emphasis on the empowerment of their female converts. The Martha Wilson Bible Institute in Hamheung city of South Hamkyeong Province had been a centre of women's education in the area in addition to numerous girls' schools throughout the Canadian mission field. In post-war Korea, too, Canadian missionary influence is acknowledged for its contribution to the development of key women's organizations and institutions in the Korean church. An officially endorsed history of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) credits Canadian missionaries for creating a culture in which, for the first time, the Korean church "was able to articulate a role for women based on the Bible that did not exclude them or force them into an extremely patriarchal structure."¹⁰ Credit for the astounding leadership of Korean women in modern Korean history belongs to Korean women and not to missionaries. But the contributions of the Canadian Mission were noted and appreciated, and these contributions were a part of the context of the *sarangbang* space through which Canadian women missionaries in post-war Korea were invited to participate in situations where Korean women's leadership would benefit from their support. These relationships, in turn, not only contributed to the efficacy of Korean women in the struggle against the dictatorship, they also effected deep personal change in the Canadian missionaries and led to some important developments in the UCC.

¹⁰ Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe, *Han Somang Anaeseo: Hankuk – Kanadakyohoe Seonkyohyeopnyeok 100junyeon Kinyeommunjip* (Seoul: Hankuk Kidokkyo Jangnohoe Chulpan, 1998), 77.

The impact of Korean Christian women on the Democratization Movement is summed up in a report from a confidential meeting of the Unit on Faith and Witness of the World Council of Churches (WCC) convened in December 1975 for the sake of establishing a support network for Korean Christian activists. Those at the meeting recognized that women were occupying a unique place in the movement. The description captures characteristics of the *sarangbang* space, at once quiet and effective, Christian and inclusive, local and international:

... [T]here is a group of women, particularly Christian women, who have been deeply involved in the struggle for human rights and social justice but have not received recognition for the quiet work they have been doing in the community all this time. These women have studied the political situation in the country, not simply from a secular point of view, but in the light of biblical teaching and through prayer. This way they have come to a new realization of the mission of the church. You've seen their involvement with members of the whole community, including women and families outside the institution of the church. The supportive role has been a tremendous source of strength and witness to the local community as well as to those of us who have had a chance to meet and talk with them.¹¹

Covering the Korean Democratization Movement for the New York Times, Andrew H. Malcolm noted that “Women, who are sometimes believed to hold a subservient position in Asian societies, are playing an increasingly prominent role in the struggle for human rights in South Korea” comparable to “the militant work of many women during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s in the American South.”¹² The article made special mention of Lee Oo Chung, whose part in the March 1 Declaration of National Salvation discussed below landed her in jail. Malcolm noted that police interrogations of Lee Oo Chung and others “revealed a belief that the women had played a vital liaison role among the more closely monitored male dissidents.” He also

¹¹ Letter from World Council of Churches Programme Unit on Faith and Witness to Participants in the Informal Consultation on Korea, dated 18 December 1975, File 23 -1, Box 23, Accession #83.019C, United Church Archives, Toronto. (underlined words are part of original text.)

¹² Andrew H. Malcolm, “Women Playing Important Role in Rights Struggle in South Korea,” New York Times, 8 December 1976, file 000116, box 2, U of T Collection Human Rights in South Korea, Toronto.

mentioned the religious services led by women “to pray for their men [in prison], to offer moral support to one another and to gather funds for the financially stricken families, whose main bread winners are in jail,” as well as the knitting of purple “victory shawls,” which raised awareness internationally for their cause.¹³

The work of Korean Christian women was a source of tremendous inspiration for Canadian women missionaries and women from the UCC visiting Korea. Willa Kernen, who worked closely with a number of women’s organizations, reflected that the Korean church had challenged her to “grow as a person, as a woman, and as a Christian.”¹⁴ Marion Pope learned about justice issues and “protesting skills” in Korea, which she transferred to life in Canada when as a retired missionary she “joined others in front of our Ontario provincial legislature asking the provincial government to stop the war against the poor.”¹⁵ Marion Current, who grew up in the northern Ontario towns of Cobalt and Timmins, was taught by her involvement in the Korean church to ask “why the English speaking minority held the power even though French speaking Canadians were in the majority there” and to question how she grew up “never knowing any aboriginal, native Canadians, although many lived in the area.”¹⁶ And in an edition of the UCC publication *Mission Magazine* dedicated to the cause of democracy in South Korea, the UCC’s first female Moderator, Lois Wilson, listed an astounding range of activities in which Korean women were involved: from fighting for women’s rights, to caring for men in prison, to addressing the issue of sex tourism, to campaigning for better care for Korean victims of the

¹³ Andrew H. Malcolm, “Women Playing Important Role in Rights Struggle in South Korea,” *New York Times*, 8 December 1976, file 000116, box 2, U of T Collection Human Rights in South Korea, Toronto.

¹⁴ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea’s Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 292.

¹⁵ Hand written note by Marion Current no date, File 003070, Box 75, U of T Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹⁶ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea’s Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 396.

atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹⁷ In the years following Wilson's 1981 visit to Korea, many Canadian women would come to learn about the issues affecting Korean women and, through exchange programs, would get the opportunity to host Korean women in Canada and be hosted in return in Korea, gaining a first hand understanding for themselves of the struggles Korea faced and how Canada was implicated in them. The following three stories give an idea of the roles that the *sarangbang*, the space created by women hosting women, played in these transformations.

A Room Without Walls

On January 30, 1975, a worship service was held to celebrate the establishment of the Sarangbang Church. In Korea the sarangbang is a detached living room used for entertaining guests. But this worship "room" had no walls. It was simply a gathering space among the slum dwellers' tents.¹⁸

The Sarangbang Church in the Imun Dong squatter village was central to one of the most important events of the South Korean Democratization Movement of the 1970s. Almost everything we know about this church in the archival records comes from the three Canadian missionaries who are the focus of this chapter. These Canadian women were impacted by the encounter in deeply personal ways that had consequences for their public service going forward. This speaks to the fact that Sarangbang Church, like the traditional *sarangbang* which inspired its name, was an important third space for women within the historical context of the Korean Democratization Movement. Sarangbang Church was not an exclusively female space and so in some respects stands outside the strict parameters of the concept of women hosting women outlined in the example of the *sarangbang* quoted at the top of this chapter. However, it was the

¹⁷ Mission Magazine, South Korea: Challenge and Celebration, Vol. 8 No.1, 1984, File 000530, U of T Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto, 18.

¹⁸ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 405-406.

locus of extraordinary female leadership, both Korean and Canadian missionary, without which the efficacy of the space would not have been the same.

The Sarangbang Church was born in the context of South Korea's enormous emerging urban squatter neighbourhoods of the 1970s. As a consequence of government policies aimed at rapid industrialization and development there was tremendous pressure on rural people to move to cities and take up low paying work in factories.¹⁹ The gendered nature of South Korean development made conditions for women especially problematic in these circumstances.²⁰ Young women and girls left the farm and travelled alone to the city to earn money to support their families, often ending their journey in sweat shops or prostitution.²¹ In some cases pressures were such that people moved to the city despite the fact that there was no guarantee of even a low paying job. Those who could not find work often lived in makeshift buildings on land that they did not own and from which they faced eviction on a regular basis.²²

Imun Dong was one such neighbourhood in southeastern Seoul. Having been served notice that they would soon be evicted, a number of residents decided to organize. They petitioned the city government, churches and other institutions, but received little sympathy from these quarters. There was, however, a gathering known as "Thursday Prayer Meetings" where

¹⁹ "Working Women of Korea," from *The Womb of Asia: Working Women of Korea* File 1, Box 75, UCLA Special Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

²⁰ Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 70.

²¹ "Working Women of Korea," from *The Womb of Asia: Working Women of Korea* File 1, Box 75, UCLA Special Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

²² "Sarang-bang: and example of religious freedom in the PROK," Fact Sheet #26, dated 1 March 1976, file #1, box #65, UCLA Special Collection 358 Democracy and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

Fact Sheets were a tool used by concerned North American churches with missionaries in South Korea to disseminate information about the situation on the peninsula to their congregations and human rights organizations. Generally, they were composed by Fred Bayliss working from UCC HQ in Toronto. Bayliss was a onetime missionary to Korea, serving from 1962 to 1972. Upon returning to Canada he worked for the Division of World Outreach but maintained an active interest in events in Korea. Most of the information for his "Fact Sheets" was gleaned from missionary reports. In this case, Fact Sheet #26, it is likely that all of the information came from Kernen, Pope and Current.

people from the Christian community were eager to learn of their situation and did take an interest.²³ Regular Thursday gatherings of the Christian supporters of political prisoners had started in the summer of 1974 not far from Imun Dong.²⁴ Young Protestant leaders had originally envisioned it as a gathering of church ministers concerned for the state of democracy and planned to hold it on Monday, a typical “day off” for church leaders.²⁵ This reflected the specifically Christian context in which the meeting was first conceived. However, circumstances soon caused the meeting to adapt.

At about the same time, a major government crackdown occurred. This crackdown was a pre-emptive move against a nation-wide protest planned for 3 April. The protest had been organized by an umbrella student organization, the Youth and Student Federation for Democratization of Korea.²⁶ Among the student organizations linked under this umbrella were university student unions and Christian student clubs such as the Korean Student Christian Federation (KSCF). These Christian clubs were ubiquitous, politically conscious and effective organizers. To counter the threat of an effective nation-wide protest, the South Korean government concocted a story about a plot by a fictional North Korea-backed Peoples Revolutionary Party (PRP), which was said to have organized the protest as a prelude a North Korean take over of the South. Under this pretext, the army and police arrested thousands of students, imprisoned hundreds and eventually executed eight men they accused of being leaders of the fictional PRP. Hundreds of victimized families with loved ones in jail or facing the death penalty, some of them Christian, found the prayer meeting arranged by the young ministers

²³ “Sarang-bang: and example of religious freedom in the PROK,” Fact Sheet #26, dated 1 March 1976, file #1, box #65, UCLA Special Collection 358 Democracy and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

²⁴ Letter author and recipient unknown, dated December 1975, file #000597, Box #18, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in South Korea, Toronto.

²⁵ Hak-kyu Sohn, *Authoritarianism and Opposition in South Korea*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 71.

²⁶ Interviews with Lee Kwang-il, 29 April 2015.

welcoming and helpful.²⁷ Thursdays coincided with other activities connected to the plight of these families and students and so the prayer meeting was moved from Monday to Thursday to accommodate them.

The Thursday Prayer Meeting quickly gained momentum. It attracted the attention of many Protestant Christians who were concerned, not only for their imprisoned fellow co-religionists, but also with the increasingly harsh tactics of the Park regime and its impact on society broadly. The circle expanded further when a number of Catholics began to show up in support of an imprisoned bishop.²⁸ Others, often non-Christians, with family members in prison connected to various protests or breaches of the Yushin Constitution also began to frequent this gathering. Kernan, Pope and Current and some other missionaries came often, as well.²⁹

The authorities did their best to shut down the Thursday Prayer Meeting, but it managed to survive by going underground, varying meeting times and locations. After the government promised to release some of its most prominent political prisoners the organizers agreed to stop the regular gatherings. However, when the promise was not kept, they started it up anew, once again in the open and this time with official support from a number of public and internationally recognized ecumenical Christian organizations with broad representation people, churches and other organizations that were sympathetic and becoming increasingly indignant at the government's intransigence. Numbers rapidly swelled so that by late 1975 there were 250 people commonly in attendance at the weekly gathering. For special services, 500 turned out.³⁰ These meetings had powerful spiritual significance, described by Lee Oo Chung as "a feast for a

²⁷ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 181.

²⁸ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 181.

²⁹ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 405.

³⁰ Letter from Willa Kernan to Frank Carey, dated 31 January 1976, file #6, box #23, Accession #83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

people drunk with the Holy Spirit.”³¹ They were politically significant as well, offering a point of contact for dissidents and affording an opportunity to exchange information and to organize. They reflect a special role that progressive Christians were playing in the movement. This was not a central role, but it was unique. While student unions and labour activists without any religious affiliation were leading most of the protests and suffering most of the persecution up to this time, Christians, under the guise of religious services, were effective in gathering and encouraging the movement beyond their own circles.³²

A number of the women from Imun Dong also began to attend the Thursday Prayer Meeting. Perhaps moved by the spiritual component or impressed by the organizational efficiency of the gathering, or both, they decided to start a church.³³ Kernen and Current made a connection with these women at the Thursday Prayer Meeting and came to the new church to visit. They participated in worship in a space among the makeshift homes and were sometimes joined by other prominent women leaders of the Korean Christian community.³⁴ Kernen, was struck by the special music used at their services: “They are new Christians and don’t know the hymns, nor do they have a hymn book, so they have written their own words to traditional Korean songs. They have a couple of beautiful indigenous ‘hymns.’”³⁵ Current was moved by their vulnerability and courage, the fact that their services were conducted between the tents in

³¹ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 181.

³² Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea’s Democratization Movement, 1970-1979*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 108.

³³ Letter from Willa Kernen to Frank Carey, dated 31 January 1976, File# 6, Box# 23 of 24, Accession# 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

³⁴ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea’s Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 405-406.

There is no record that Pope attended Sarangbang Church but it is very possible that she did.

³⁵ Letter from Willa Kernen to Frank Carey, dated 31 January 1976, File# 6, Box# 23 of 24, Accession# 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

the slum, a “church without walls.”³⁶ This was not a church that drew its power from impressive architecture, elegant stained glass windows or stately organ music. Rather, its focus was on a community of people and their needs.

Sarangbang was the name given this remarkable church. As noted above, the word *sarangbang* refers to the inner sanctum of a traditional (and relatively wealthy) Korean house. This name for a church of slum dwellers who had no permanent physical structures to call home was ironical in that sense. But the word *sarang* is also the Korean word for “love.” *Bang* is Korean for “room.” The name “Love Room” for the church, therefore, also suggested a place of Christian empathy, caring and solidarity. The nature of the space in which they worshipped was a reflection of their overall living conditions. It also resonated with non-Christian efforts in other Asian contexts and thus, like the Minjung theology which would be inspired by it and like the worship space itself, it lacked a definitive boundary between sacred and secular. In a similar way that Sarangbang Church women were doing, workers in Korea and all over Asia for many years, especially women, had been creating communities religious and otherwise within which to organize and address their specific needs within a rapidly modernizing and exploitative environment.³⁷

The new Christian community at Imun Dong had a religious impact that went beyond the immediate slum community and eventually exceeded the Korean church at large. Marion Current witnessed the impression it made on Minjung theologian Suh Nam Dong who spent time listening to the members of the church describe their life in the slums. “Looking back, I can see how situations like this influenced Rev. [sic] Suh,” she wrote, “The slum dwellers became his

³⁶ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 405-406.

³⁷ Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Women in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 203.

teachers.”³⁸ The insight Suh gleaned from Sarangbang Church influenced his own theology, which in turn helped to form the faith of many Christians in Korea and beyond.

Sarangbang Church and its connection to Christians with sympathies for political prisoners made an impression on the authorities, too.³⁹ After trying to discourage the budding relationship between Imun Dong residents and the Thursday Prayer Meeting, they took extreme measures and decided to demolish the shanty town where they held their meetings.⁴⁰ Kernan reported that on 9 February 1976 “a group of wreckers from the local government offices, together with some 14 police men, guarded by KCIA agents, helped by the Reserve Force Army (the location is next to their training ground)” bulldozed the worship space and the surrounding makeshift homes.⁴¹ Thirty people including children were taken into detention, six women were sentenced to five days in prison, and four men to ten days, one child was injured and the belongings and homes of the entire community trashed.⁴² Current was left traumatized by what had transpired.⁴³ She attempted to document the aftermath with her camera, but in the emotion of the moment her hands were trembling so badly that most images came out blurry.⁴⁴ One photograph, however, was captured clearly: “It was of Rev. [sic] Moon Ikhwan,⁴⁵ head bowed, holding the now

³⁸ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 405.

³⁹ U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Box# 44, File# 001577, Galilee Church dated 30 April 1976.

⁴⁰ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 406.

⁴¹ Accession# 83.019C, Box# 23 of 24, File# 6, dated 31 January 1976.

⁴² UCLA Collection 358, Box 65, File 1, Sarangbang Church fact sheet Fred Bayliss dated January 1976.

⁴³ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 406.

⁴⁴ Handwritten notes re Sarang-Bang Church (by Marion Current, no name or date) File# 003087, U of T collection, Box 75, U of T collection of Democracy and Human Rights, Toronto; Marion Current, “A New Day Had Dawned,” in *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution*, Jim Stentzel ed. (Seoul: The Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006).

⁴⁵ Moon Ikhwan was a prominent dissident, Minjung theologian, teacher at the Mission Education Centre (MEC) and son of Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook who attended Toronto Korean United Church and were associated with the UCC Mission in Yongjeong, Manchuria.

smashed white plywood cross on his shoulder. The cross had been trampled on, broken, and splattered with excrement.”⁴⁶ The image vividly captured the drama and significance of what had taken place and was circulated widely.⁴⁷

There was a clear connection between the leadership of the Imun Dong women, Korean women church leaders and Canadian women missionaries. The events at Sarangbang Church are also linked to one of the most pivotal moments of the South Korean Democratization Movement, the March 1 Declaration for National Salvation.⁴⁸ Many of the Korean church leaders who had been present at Sarangbang Church and who had been emotionally impacted by its destruction, including Kernen, Pope and Current, played a central role in the March 1 Declaration less than a month later. “Of course,” wrote Current, “the Sarang-Bang [sic] church tragedy was only one part of the story, but it is my belief that it was a major factor behind the March 1st Declaration.”⁴⁹ In his testimony to the Court for his role in this March 1 action, Suh Nam Dong corroborates Current’s analysis, crediting his encounter with people in the slums for hardening his resolve to participate:

I had some relations with slum area people. I found out they are poor not because they are lazy but because of policy that makes them poor. Unless they fight to change the policy, they will not be able to get a better life. But the government will not change its policy. But if government does not change, then communists will infiltrate the slums. That endangers our country. So, I signed the declaration.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea’s Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 407.

⁴⁷ CURRENTLY SEEKING THIS IMAGE

⁴⁸ This event will be discussed in detail below.

⁴⁹ U of T collection, Box 75, File# 003087, handwritten notes re Sarang-Bang Church (by Marion Current, no name or date).

⁵⁰ UCLA Archives 358 Special Collection South Korean Democracy, Box 14, File 2, handwritten account of Suh Nam Dong’s trial

Moon Ikhwan, who penned the March 1 Declaration, was also convinced by the government violence against the Sarangbang congregation and its surrounding community that he needed to do something more than just pray.⁵¹

The Declaration itself (which is the topic of the next story) was delivered in a Catholic cathedral contiguous with a religious ceremony and signed exclusively by Christians. This document, however, did not reference a Christian point of view or seek to speak for Christians specifically. Rather it was an appeal to the national aspirations of all Koreans and to the international community, “a solemn and patriotic declaration concerning democracy.” Of top concern was national reunification, a priority shared by the student of the 4.19 uprising which briefly succeeded in securing a democratic government before Park’s military coup nipped their efforts in the bud. “This is the time when we must unite,” it read, “and foster Democratic forces inside and outside of our country toward the goal of national reunification which is the aspiration of our people.”⁵² The Declaration also took aim at Park’s approach to economic development, noting that the “narrow thinking the present regime devoted all the energies of our people to economic development by sacrificing everything else.” They warned that a nation where the rich became richer and the poor poorer was only a breeding ground for communism.⁵³ Korean Church historian Wi Jo Kang has characterized the March 1 Declaration as “the most eventful and climactic demonstration of all Christian political dissent under the Park regime.”⁵⁴ Korean

⁵¹ Willa Kernen, “Timothy Moon: Poet and Prophet,” *Mission Magazine* Vol. 8, No. 1, 1984; 8-11. File 000530, box 15, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

⁵² The Patriotic Declaration for Democracy, file 001979, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

⁵³ The Patriotic Declaration for Democracy, file 001979, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

⁵⁴ Wi Jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: a History of Christianity and Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 113.

historian Kenneth Wells has pointed out its significance in fusing Protestant and Catholics into a “minjung Christianity.”⁵⁵

Kang and Wells are not alone in their assessment that the March 1 Declaration was a pivotal event in the South Korean Democratization Movement and a defining moment for Christian participation in that movement.⁵⁶ Sociologist and South Korean Democratization Movement scholar Paul Y. Chang’s, structural approach in *Protest Dialectics*⁵⁷ gives a persuasive explanation of the social dynamics behind the March 1 Declaration. He provides the reasons that Christian activists were able to step into the void created by the Park regime’s promulgation of Emergency Measure (EM) #9 which limited the ability of students and labour organizations to protest. However, the story of Sarangbang Church shows that a group of the most marginalized women in Korean society with the courage to organize had a significant impact on the Democratization Movement by hosting other women and men from the Korean Christian and missionary community. It also gives an idea of the ways in which the missionaries who participated were personally impacted by events, a direct result of their willingness to share the *sarangbang* space with Korean women, and it adds a layer to the history of the March 1 Declaration that has not been appreciated to date.

Room with a View

⁵⁵ Kenneth Wells, ed., *South Korean’s Minjung Movement: The Culture and Politics of Dissidence*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 89.

⁵⁶ Human Rights Committee of the National Council of Churches in Korea, *1970 Democratization Movement*, Vol. I (Seoul: National Council of Churches in Korea, 1986), 688; Hak-kyu Sohn, *Authoritarianism and Opposition in South Korea*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 95; Gi-Wook Shin, Paul Y. Chang, Jung-eun Lee, Sookyung Kim, “South Korea’s Democracy Movement (1970-1993):Stanford Korea Democracy Project Report,” (Stanford University: December, 2007), 35, https://fsi-live.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/KDP_Report_%28final%29-1.pdf; Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea’s Democratization Movement, 1970-1979*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 90, 152, 163, 206.

⁵⁷ Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea’s Democratization Movement, 1970-1979*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

While... [writing this letter], I'm enjoying the sunshine coming in the window beside me of our new southern exposed Apartment, as well as the panoramic view of a section of Seoul looking out of the 5th floor (the top one) of a building already set rather high on a hill. We can look beyond the small apartment building where Marion Current is to the overhead road to Sin Chon. Marion Pope and I are enjoying settling in to this lovely new apartment. We hope we will be able to continue enjoying it together for a long time.⁵⁸

Prior to December 1975, Kernen and Pope had lived in the UCC Korea Mission compound near Seodaemun, the Great Western Gate of the Choson Dynasty's historic capital, now Seoul. At times they had hosted Korean friends in their grand home, serving such dishes as Yorkshire pudding with the help of a Korean cook.⁵⁹ The 1974 consultation between the UCC and the PROK (subject of chapter 3) had agreed to transfer all UCC mission property in Korea to the PROK. The Edwardian mission house was scheduled for redevelopment as the Mission and Education Centre (subject of chapter 4). Kernen and Pope were, therefore, moved out of the Seodaemun compound and into an apartment owned by the PROK. The two women were now tenants of the Korean church rather than the matrons of a Mission-owned property with Korean staff. Though centrally located in a good neighborhood of Seoul, the apartment did not communicate privilege or a raised social position in any way. There was nothing to distinguish Kernen and Pope's new residence from that of millions of South Koreans who had moved into the modern concrete structures rising like "forests"⁶⁰ out of the quickly modernizing urban landscape. It was a different position, but did not seem to create any discomfort or resentment. Indeed, judging from her letter cited above, Kernen seems to have been quite pleased with the new arrangement; she had a sunny room with a view, one close friend for an apartment mate and another nearby.

⁵⁸ Willa Kernen to Frank Carey dated 31 January 1976, File #6, Box#23, Accession# 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁵⁹ Letter from Willa Kernen to Walter and Lenore Beecham dated 16 March 1975, File# 23-3, Box # 23, Accession #83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁶⁰ It is common for Koreans to speak of new apartment developments as "Apartment forests."

Kernen and Pope would continue to host Koreans in their apartment. Some were friends. Some were strangers, fugitives who sought a safe house in which to hide from the authorities. The fact that Kernen and Pope were foreign nationals of a western country did not always provide the desired protection for these internal refugees. It is hard to know whether the walls of the Seodaemun compound or the imposing structure of a large brick home might have provided more safety, but in their new apartment the police did not hesitate to visit them in the late hours of the night and demand they give up their guests. Reminiscent of the earlier story of Dr. Murray's house arrest under Japanese colonial authorities, Kernen and Pope, in February prior to the March 1 incident (described below), had given shelter to a young woman who was wanted by the police for publishing a statement by the imprisoned Catholic poet Kim Chi Ha.⁶¹ Unlike in Murray's case, however, the police did visit and little could be done to stop the woman from being taken away.⁶²

Days later⁶³ on 29 February, less than a month after the destruction of the Sarangbang Church, Kernen "innocently" invited her friend Lee Oo Chung over after Sunday worship. Perhaps seeking to insert some normalcy into what had been an extraordinarily turbulent time for the three missionaries and their Korean friends, Kernen and Current were planning a celebration of Pope's birthday (which was the next day on the first of March.) Lee accepted, but after dinner surprised her hosts with a request to spend the night.⁶⁴ Lee explained that she had in her possession a statement written by Moon Ikhwan and signed by twelve prominent Christian

⁶¹ Monday Night Group (MG) dated 23 August 2003, File 003070, Box 75, U of T Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

⁶² Letter from Korea (author and recipient unknown) – dated March 1, 1976, File 6, Box 23 of 34, Accession #83.019C, United Church Archives, Toronto. (This was likely a letter from Willa Kernen to Frank Carey, the names of those involved have been deliberately excluded in case the document was intercepted by the authorities.)

⁶³ The record is not clear.

⁶⁴ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 282.

leaders calling for President Park Chung Hee to resign. Such statements were strictly outlawed by EM #9 which had recently been promulgated by the government and which prohibited criticism of the President or the regime in any form. Nevertheless, the signatories, Lee included, were determined to have it read out at a public worship service the next day. Aware that the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) were on the lookout for any sign of political resistance, organizers of the protest surmised that women would be less of a target for authorities. Lee Oo Chung, the only woman among them, had therefore been charged to keep the document safe until the evening of the next day. Notwithstanding the fact that the missionaries' home had recently been visited by the police, Lee felt that she and the document would be safer there than anywhere else.⁶⁵

The reading of the Declaration was planned to take place during an evening mass at the Myeongdong Cathedral in the centre of the old capital. A special mass had been planned for members of the Catholic church who were currently in prison for their political views. In the end, hundreds of concerned Catholics and dozens of supportive Protestant leaders were present. The place was undoubtedly swarming with undercover police as well and Lee was worried that she might be intercepted on the way to the service. As a further precaution, therefore, they decided that she should give the document to one of the missionaries to smuggle in. As a signatory to the declaration, Lee Oo Chung was also aware that the action would likely result in her arrest. In anticipation of this eventuality the four of them developed a strategy to alert various Christians organizations overseas if this should occur. Plans were made to contact the WCC, Conference of Churches in Asia (CCA), American Council of Churches and the Canadian

⁶⁵ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 282.

Council of Churches among others. The signal that Lee had been arrested was to be a phone call from Lee explaining that “she would be unable to meet with them for their appointment.”⁶⁶

When they arrived at the cathedral at 7pm the next evening, Pope had the document upon which the Declaration for National Salvation was inscribed safely stashed away in her purse. Once inside the sanctuary she gave it to Lee who took it to her fellow signatories. At this point Lee was informed that the police had indeed got wind that something was about to happen and detained the man who was supposed to read the Declaration. Lee was asked if she would read it to the gathering in his stead. It was no small request and the other signatories were later upbraided by female leaders for asking Lee to take this risk.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, following mass she mounted the pulpit and delivered the statement “with a clear and ringing voice.”⁶⁸

The stunt succeeded beyond the organizers’ wildest dreams. Part of its power came from the tremendous symbolic significance of the date and place. 57 years earlier to the day, on 1 March 1919, Koreans had risen up to demand independence from Japan. A massive and peaceful public demonstration had been timed to influence the post-WWI deliberations in Paris and put pressure on US President Woodrow Wilson to abide by his precept of “self-determination” for nations under foreign rule. Met with a bloody crackdown by the Japanese colonial police and soldiers, the movement failed to secure Korean independence but had galvanized a sense of national pride and purpose. The date for the 1976 Declaration for National Salvation was chosen precisely because it had the power to evoke the memory of a peaceful grassroots nationalist uprising in opposition to an oppressive ruling authority.⁶⁹ The location of

⁶⁶ Letter from Korea – dated March 1, 1976, File 6, Box 23 of 34, Accession #83.019C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

⁶⁷ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 215.

⁶⁸ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 213.

⁶⁹ U of T Special Collection on Human Rights in South Korea, File# 001563, Letter from Ahn Byung Mu distributed by ecumenical forum in Canada dated 4 April 1977.

the 1976 Declaration, Myeongdong Cathedral, was also important. The building was one of the oldest and most prominent Catholic churches in the nation. The event, therefore, marshalled powerful cultural symbolism which signalled a connection to the West, but also 200 plus years of Korean Christian leadership and martyrdom. Unlike the first March 1 Declaration whose signatories were from diverse religious traditions (12 Protestant Christians, 12 Chundogyo followers (an indigenous Korean religion), and 3 Buddhists,) the signatories of the 1976 Declaration for National Salvation were all Protestant Christian, with one notable exception, Kim Dae Jung, a Catholic and well-known political opposition leader. The event captured the imagination of Koreans and galvanized activists in the country.⁷⁰ Significantly, it also captured the attention of the international press and Christians overseas.

The 1976 March 1 Declaration was the first large act of political dissent following the promulgation of EM #9, and, from what I can determine, it was the moment when Christian activism took the lead in the Democratization Movement, all other groups including students and press having earlier been effectively silenced by the regime's heavy hand.⁷¹ It also galvanized Catholic-Protestant ecumenical and political cooperation⁷² and catapulted Korean Christianity into the spotlight. During the trial for his part in the 1976 March 1 Declaration, Kim Dae Jung, who would be elected president of South Korea in 1998, made the following statement:

[T]he March 1 Democratic Declaration – not just because of this Declaration but because this has become a symbolic moment – has lifted the status of the Korean church so high that the world church cannot speak of the problems of the Christianity of a new generation without mentioning the Korean church.⁷³

⁷⁰ Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea's Democratization Movement, 1970-1979*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 90.

⁷¹ Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics: State Repression and South Korea's Democratization Movement, 1970-1979*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 108.

⁷² Letter from Ahn Byung Mu distributed by ecumenical forum in Canada dated 4 April 1977, File# 001563, U of T Special Collection on Human Rights in South Korea; Clark, "Growth and Limitations of Minjung Christianity in South Korea", *South Korean Minjung Movement*, 89.

⁷³ U of T Special Collection on Human Rights in South Korea, Box 3, File 000118, Kim Dae Jung's final testimony in Seoul Court

Kim's boast was not without reason. The event had indeed captured the attention of the international community. The degree to which it had raised awareness for their cause came as a surprise, even to the Christian activists who had pulled it off.⁷⁴ This success was due in large part to the plan set in motion by Lee Oo Chung from within the *sarangbang* space hosted by her missionary friends. When the shrill ring of the telephone broke the silence of their apartment at midnight, Lee Oo Chung's calm voice informed Kernen in English, "I'm sorry I won't be able to keep our lunch appointment tomorrow."⁷⁵ The police had arrived at her apartment to take her away and she had persuaded them to allow her the call by explaining it would give a bad impression of Koreans if she were to break a promise with foreigners without notice.⁷⁶ Following the plan devised the night before, Kernen and Pope then got on the phone to their friends around the world. A follow up call was made immediately to the New York Times which published a notification in its very next issue.⁷⁷ Lee Oo Chung maintained that an article appeared in the New York Times about her arrest on 1 March as well as a translated copy of the Declaration.⁷⁸ This is not possible. 12 midnight on 2 March, the time Lee called Kernen to alert her to her arrest, would already be 11am 1 March in New York. It is possible that there was a report in the 2 March edition of the New York Times, but one was not found in the archives. A 3 March article from the Japan Times, however, reads as follows:

Miss Lee Oo Chung, 53, president of Korean Church Women United, was arrested Monday by Korean authorities in Seoul, the US National Council of

⁷⁴ Human Rights Committee of the National Council of Churches in Korea, *1970 Democratization Movement*, Vol. I (Seoul: National Council of Churches in Korea, 1986), 684-685.

⁷⁵ Willa Kernen, "the Story of Lee Oo Chung," no date, File 1, Box 75, UCLA Special Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

⁷⁶ Willa Kernen, "the Story of Lee Oo Chung," no date, File 1, Box 75, UCLA Special Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

⁷⁷ "ROK Churchwoman Held in Seoul" New York (AP) The Japan Times, March 3, 1976, file 6, box 23, Accession 83.019C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁷⁸ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 214.

Churches reported. Miss Lee, a human rights activist, was arrested after her participation in an ecumenical mass celebrating Korean Independence Day, the interdenominational church body here said. She recently resigned her position as professor of Christian ethics at Seoul Women's College, rather than capitulate to Ministry of Education pressures that she stop her work with Church Women United and her effort on behalf of detainees and their families. Miss Lee has been detained for questioning three times – for five, six and two days. This is the first time she has been arrested, however, the report said. The US council has consistently joined with the national council of churches in Korea in opposition to alleged violations of human rights there. Church officials here said they see Miss Lee's arrest as an example of a pattern of oppression in Korea.

The speed with which the news came out was significant. It shows how well the Democratization Movement participants were organized. It also speaks to the effectiveness of women's networks for getting information out. This is another example of the power of the *sarangbang* space.

The article mentions that Lee had previously been detained and held for days, but that this was her first arrest. On this occasion the police applied extra pressure as well. Lee Oo Chung was subjected to sleep deprivation and kept awake for a whole week.⁷⁹ One thing the KCIA wanted to know was how the news of her arrest and the Declaration had gotten out so fast.⁸⁰ People around the world had responded immediately. At Toronto Korean United Church (TKUC), leaders Kim Chai Choon (the founder of the PROK) and Moon Chai Rin (whose diary was cited in chapter 1 and who was father of Moon Ikhwan, the writer of the Declaration) put on mourning clothes and went to the Korean consulate to hold a protest. American Church Women United started a writing campaign to petition for Lee Oo Chung's release. In America, the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan and other places, women wrote letters and sent them to their governments to ask that they apply pressure to South Korean embassies and government

⁷⁹ March 1st fact sheet, dated 30 March 1976, file 2, box 14, UCLA Archives Special Collection 358 South Korean Democracy, Los Angeles.

⁸⁰ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 218.

agencies demanding freedom for the imprisoned, and to the prisoners to encourage them and inform them of their solidarity. The WCC and the CCA weighed in as did the International Council of Judges. The Korean Authorities were shocked but unable to get anything out of Lee under interrogation except a scolding: how, she demanded of them, could they treat her and others this way simply for telling the truth!?!⁸¹

The reading of the March 1 Declaration at a church service introduced to the wider Korean society the debate about the relationship between religion and politics. The Declaration had called for the freedom to criticize the government and had been particularly strong in demanding Park Chung Hee take responsibility for the economic ills of the country including a burgeoning international debt. It also called for the reunification of the nation by democratic means.⁸² The fact that these issues were raised in the context of a Catholic mass invited questions about the place of politics in religion and vis versa. This relationship was debated in the courts when Lee Oo Chung was sentenced.⁸³ Lee, herself had tackled this topic in a prayer before her trial. Calling on God for support, Lee had stated that “so called political persons” had spoken out “based on their religious belief and conviction rather than political belief. They tried to build the Kingdom of God with their religious determination. ... [T]hey had been arrested for calling right things right and wrong things wrong.”⁸⁴ This was an important discursive challenge that Lee and other Christians were presenting to the state. The March 1 Declaration had brought it to the fore.⁸⁵ At her trial, Lee was sentenced to 3 years in prison, which was suspended, and an

⁸¹ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 223.

⁸² The Patriotic Declaration for Democracy, file 001979, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

⁸³ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 220.

⁸⁴ Lee Oo Chung, Prayer for Salvation of the Nation, 27 August 1976, File 6, Box 75, UCLA Special Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

⁸⁵ Stanford Korea Democracy Project, 35.

additional 3 years suspension of civil rights.⁸⁶ This meant, among other things, that she was not entitled to vote or to leave the country. But in the United States she was awarded the Human Rights Award by *Christianity and Crisis*, a magazine or journal out of Union Theological School in New York. While she was prevented by the government from traveling to receive it, the distinction further raised the stature of the Korean Democratization Movement and the Christian church's involvement.⁸⁷

Lee and the women whose husbands were arrested following the March 1 Declaration added a further dimension to the discursive battle with the government by using cultural symbols to make their case transnationally. Malcolm's December 1976 article in the New York Times entitled "Women Playing Important Role in Rights Struggle in South Korea" noted one such action that was garnering attention in the United States: the Victory Shawl project.⁸⁸ The act of crocheting shawls was an intriguing culturally hybrid move, involving Korean women in an activity which traditionally belonged to women of Western heritage. The art of crochet, the shawl as an item of clothing, the colour purple signifying suffering in Christian tradition and the "V" shape, which symbolized the English word "Victory"⁸⁹ were all Western cultural symbols used to imbue the project with meaning that could be understood by an international Christian community. In these respects, the shawls were a translation or representation of a Korean experience in a medium to which Western women could easily relate. But they contained important Korean meaning and symbolism as well. In a letter explaining the shawls to women in

⁸⁶ Willa Kernen, "the Story of Lee Oo Chung," no date, File 1, Box 75, UCLA Special Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

⁸⁷ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 230.

⁸⁸ Andrew H. Malcolm, "Women Playing Important Role in Rights Struggle in South Korea," New York Times, 8 December 1976, file 000116, box 2, U of T Collection Human Rights in South Korea, Toronto.

⁸⁹ Jim Stentzel, ed., *More Than Witnesses: How a Small Group of Missionaries Aided Korea's Democratic Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2006), 174.

North America, the wives of the men imprisoned for their role in the March 1 Declaration explained that while purple is the Christian colour for suffering, it is also the colour of Korea's national flower, the Rose of Sharon, symbolizing the love of Korea. What's more, they explained, "[f]or each 'V' – shaped pattern, four crocheted stitches are required. It takes four words in Korean to say the The Recovery of Democracy – Min Chu Whay Bok.⁹⁰ As we crochet, instead of shedding tears for our husbands, we repeat the words, Min Chu Whay Bok." The letter tried to inspire support by underlining the fact that the completion of one Victory Shawl required a total of 10,000 stitches, which symbolized the need for 10,000 voices of support for each shawl. Therefore, "[w]e need your voice saying to your government – the Recovery of Democracy in South Korea now."⁹¹ These shawls were distributed around the world, including Canada through women in the UCC, raising awareness for the struggle of democracy in South Korea and engaging a transnational network of Christian women in that struggle.^{92v}

Two nights before Lee Oo Chung had arrived at the missionaries' apartment for Pope's birthday party, Marion Current had a dream that Lee was an important official in the government.⁹³ While many of her comrades in the Democratization Movement did eventually find positions in the Korean government when Kim Dae Jung was elected, Lee was never inclined to get involved in this way. Nevertheless, the dream seems to have been a premonition of the central role she would play in the nation and the new possibilities her leadership would present. Scholars agree that the March 1 Declaration of National Salvation was a complex event with many contributing actors. They also agree that it played a pivotal role in the South Korean

⁹⁰ 민 주 회 복 (民主恢復)

⁹¹ The Story of the Victory Shawl, North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea, October 1976, File 23 -4, Box 23, Accession #83.019C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

⁹² Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 224.

⁹³ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 208. Double check

Democratization Movement. Furthermore, there is consensus that it defined the Christian contribution to that movement. However, the critical role of women in the March 1 Declaration of 1976 has been overlooked. Without the encounter in Kernan and Pope's lovely new apartment, new vistas may never have unfolded for the Democratization Movement or the UCC women who supported it.

Room of Horrors

We had a reception at the YWCA [in Seoul.] I was the only woman on the four person team. And there were only two women in this vast group. And they took me aside and said, you must go to Kwangju.⁹⁴

Lois Wilson, Interview 26 July 2018

The YWCA [in Kwangju] have left the bullet holes in windows and ceiling and walls as a reminder of what happened. ... [P]eople were forbidden to enter the Y, as it was used as a morgue, and someone mentioned the blood seeping down the pipes from the floor above.⁹⁵

Lois Wilson, Notes from a trip to South Korea January 1981

When the Rt. Revd. Lois Wilson, the UCC's first woman Moderator, arrived in South Korea in January 1981, the only female member of a four-person fact-finding team from the World Council of Churches (WCC),⁹⁶ she was only vaguely aware of the missionary history of the UCC in that place.⁹⁷ Before she left Canada however, as the newly elected leader of the UCC, Wilson was briefed by the minister of Toronto Korean United Church (TKUC), the Revd. Sang Chul Lee. Lee tried to give her a taste of the tensions she would have to navigate in the

⁹⁴ Interview with Lois Wilson 26 July 2018

⁹⁵ Memorandum from Ted S??t to Lois Wilson, dated 2 February 1981, File #8, Box#1, Accession #94.170C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁹⁶ Lois Wilson, *Turning the World Upside Down: A Memoir* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1989), 82.

⁹⁷ Interview with Lois Wilson 26 July 2018

She could think of only one missionary, a woman by the name of Beulah Bourns who, she remembered hearing, had run an orphanage somewhere.

Korean church by sharing a little anecdote: The two main Presbyterian denominations on the peninsula each had a different reputation, he told her; members of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) believed in Jesus and expected to go to heaven whereas the members of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) believed in Jesus and expected to go to prison. The reputation of the latter derived from its inclination to challenge the government on its human rights abuses. The PROK, he added, had a special history with the UCC.⁹⁸ Later Wilson was to say that it was the Korean church had a tremendous impact on her.⁹⁹ But when two women took her aside soon after her arrival in Seoul to share their tragic story and ask for her help, Wilson could not have known the Korean tradition of the *sarangbang*, its role in mission history or its transformational potential.

Landing at Gimpo International Airport, the WCC team had been informed of their full, carefully crafted and officially sanctioned schedule by their Korean hosts. The serious tensions in the Korean church, as Sang Chul Lee had suggested in his briefing to Wilson, was between those wishing to inform the outside world about the regime's abuses and others seeking to avoid negative attention from authorities in the high-surveillance state. The visitors' agenda, tempered by those wishing to avoid fraught political issues, limited their ability to find out what was really going on. Wilson had decided, perhaps with Sang Chul Lee's encouragement, to make time for visits outside the schedule with people connected with the PROK. An unofficial report documenting her engagements during the visit indicates that this is exactly what she did.¹⁰⁰

One of the first stops on the official schedule was a reception at the YWCA in Seoul to meet dignitaries for the various Korean denominations. Wilson remembers being one of the only

⁹⁸ Lois Wilson, *Turning the World Upside Down: A Memoir* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1989), 82.

⁹⁹ Interview with Lois Wilson 26 July 2018

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum from Ted S??t to Lois Wilson, dated 2 February 1981, File #8, Box#1, Accession #94.170C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

women in the room filled with men (ironic considering the location.) There were in fact just two other women in the room. These woman, Wilson recounts, waited for an opportune moment to approach her. Taking her aside they pressed her to travel to the southeastern city of Kwangju where there had recently been a massacre of civilians by government troops.¹⁰¹ Information was still difficult to get out. They needed her help. But when she brought the idea to her WCC team leader, she met resistance. “You can’t go,” he said, “we have all these church commitments. It’s illegal. It’s martial law!” But Wilson insisted, “I have to because these women asked me.”¹⁰²

A year earlier the political clouds over South Korea had appeared to be lifting. The assassination of President Park Chung Hee gave activists cause to hope the country might return to democracy. Although marshal law remained in effect for some time after the assassination, the Emergency Measures that Park had imposed were lifted and the Yushin Constitution was rescinded. Lee Oo Chung, in an interview with the UCC’s *Mission Magazine* early in 1980 was in a lighthearted mood. She joked that she didn’t want to blame (or credit) God for the events that had come to pass, but that on the night that the President was assassinated a member of her prayer group had prayed “Oh God, please visit the blue house (the residence of the President Park), and also visit the CIA building.”¹⁰³ Half an hour later they heard that the President had been shot by the head of the KCIA. Since that time, the article had reported, things had gotten easier for Lee. The 8 person-strong secret police detail that had been charged to keep an eye on her day and night had gone away. “I rather miss them,” she quipped.¹⁰⁴ Another result was that

¹⁰¹ Interview with Lois Wilson 26 July 2018.

¹⁰² Interview with Lois Wilson 26 July 2018.

¹⁰³ R.C. Plant, “Lee Oo Jung speaks to us,” *Mandate* Sept 1980, file #001512, Box 43, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹⁰⁴ R.C. Plant, “Lee Oo Jung speaks to us,” *Mandate* Sept 1980, file #001512, Box 43, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

she was able to return to her job as Professor at Seoul Women's University and could once again travel abroad.¹⁰⁵

But the positive developments did not continue. As Chun Doo Hwan, a military general from Park Chung Hee's inner circle, began his ascendancy, hopes for democracy faded.¹⁰⁶ In May of 1980, students in the southeastern city of Kwangju began a protest against the state of martial law that had still not been lifted. Based on a report made by Willa Kernen after a visit between 6 and 7 June (since corroborated by other reports), the following is a brief outline of events as they occurred.¹⁰⁷ The protests began on 14 May. Two days later a torchlight parade of 35,000 protesters peacefully marched through the downtown core. On 18 May a conflict erupted between students and the police and some were arrested. At 3:30 pm that day, paratroopers were trucked into the city and attacked the students, taking some away. Later these same paratroopers visited hospitals and dragged out the injured students. Citizens counted 200 bodies of dead students in the aftermath of this initial foray. The citizens of Kwangju responded in anger. They targeted specific buildings and burned them. They engaged violently with the military who fired on and killed many of them. Eventually some acquired arms with which to defend themselves. On 22 May, the military withdrew from the city, successfully repelled by the armed citizens. The people of Kwangju then formed a countermeasures committee that sought to negotiate with the South Korean government. But students were less conciliatory and occupied provincial government buildings. On 27 May, the military entered the city in force, resulting in what witnesses called a "sea of blood." Many atrocities were recorded.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 308.

¹⁰⁶ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 308.

¹⁰⁷ More News of Kwangju, dated 9 June 1980, file #001504, Box 42, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹⁰⁸ More News of Kwangju, dated 9 June 1980, file #001504, Box 42, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

UCC missionary nurse Marion Pope had been in the middle of it all having recently been transferred from Seoul to work in Kwangju. Writing from the heart of the city as events unfolded on 24 May, she recorded at 6:15pm her fear and dismay at what she had witnessed:

How have the days and nights past to become a week? It seems like an age, yet one day. My greatest fear has been that the soldiers would come into the hospital and slaughter the young patients and the staff, other patients too. The waiting is an aspect of the torture, a strong weapon.¹⁰⁹

She wondered at how many had been shot to death or beaten and captured. “Surely the journalists will tell the news someday,” she assured herself. But on the other hand, she knew the government was spreading lies and doing an effective job of keeping the truth under wraps.

Writing to her mother on the same day she, reflected on her new scepticism regarding official media:

Because of this experience it is much easier to understand what is probably happening elsewhere in the world when listening to... “news reports.” A few days ago I heard news items of events in Afghanistan and South Africa and was able to interpret them into a semblance of the truth. I heard that high school girls marched in Afghanistan and 20 died; I interpret that is 200 [dead.] I heard that SWAPO gorillas fought with police in South Africa and I interpret that as youth and all the citizens struggling to reveal the truth, and at the last, desperate and hopeless, knowing they can trust no authority, knowing that they will die soon just going on, struggling for justice and righteousness even in the midst of chaos.¹¹⁰

This, she surmised, was the equivalent of how the truth was being twisted regarding the events she had been witnessing. Pope’s fears were well founded. The government had succeeded in keeping news of what happened out of the public eye and away from the international press, including the massacre of 27 May which Pope witnessed days later from her vantage point in the

¹⁰⁹ Report of Marion Pope from Kwangju, dated 24 May 1980, file #001497, Box 42, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹¹⁰ Letter from Marion Pope to mother, dated 25 May 1980 (Kwangju), file #001498, Box 42, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

hospital.¹¹¹ Throughout the period from 14 to 27 May, Pope worked tirelessly, not even able to change clothes for a full week and sleeping very little. Her hospital had set up a blood transfusion centre.¹¹² As a nurse, she marvelled at the bravery she saw in the students and other citizens in the effort to save the injured. “But what courage!” she exclaimed, “I waited Monday morning for the hospital to start taking blood and was one of the first in the afternoon when they started, after the first victims began to arrive. But young people commandeered every kind of vehicle to bring in the injured and blood donors.”¹¹³ Another story she told involved a young woman “who asked to be allowed to go to the front of the line to give blood first because she said she had to go back to town to help the others. On her way back to town she was shot and killed.”¹¹⁴

The parallels and differences between Pope’s account of the Kwangju Massacre and Romona Underwood’s account of the 4.19 student uprising twenty years earlier (chapter 2) are intriguing. Underwood describes the violence of the 1960 attack by police on students from a safe distance and seems self-congratulatory in describing the ways UCC missionaries had modelled Christian behaviour by donating blood, “actually set[ting] the example which was followed by some of the Koreans.”¹¹⁵ Pope, by contrast, is very much a part of events, as vulnerable to the threat of violence as her Korean colleagues and neighbours. She is early in line to give blood, but is more impressed by the example of the students whose selfless sacrifice

¹¹¹ Report of Marion Pope from Kwangju, dated 24 May 1980, file #001497, Box 42, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹¹² Kwangju Massacre (version edited by Marion Pope) no date, File 003070, Box 75, U of T Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹¹³ Letter from Marion Pope to mother, dated 25 May 1980 (Kwangju), file #001498, Box 42, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹¹⁴ Kwangju Massacre (version edited by Marion Pope) no date, File 003070, Box 75, U of T Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹¹⁵ Letter of Romona Underwood to Mrs. Taylor of the WMS, 2 June 1960, Series 9, Box #83, Accession 83.058C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

far exceeds her own contribution. The differences between the two reports reflect the position in which each woman found herself as events unfolded. But they also suggest a profound transformation of the UCC missionary presence in Korea.

Willa Kernen's visit in June and others like it helped to establish some of the facts of the Kwangju massacre. In August 1980 Marion Current was entrusted with photographs of events to smuggle out of the country and give to Korean activists living in Canada.¹¹⁶ Despite these efforts and many others, the South Korean government with Gen. Chun Doo Hwan as its new authoritarian leader contested accounts of events. The timing of Wilson's visit and her position as the head of Canada's largest Protestant denomination and member of a WCC team was critical. She represented a global Christian organization and thus lent a significant degree of credibility to the claims of human rights activists. Having decided to go down to Kwangju, Wilson turned to UCC missionary Walter Beecham to find a way.¹¹⁷ In Kwangju they were met at the train station and taken to the YWCA in town. The director there was a woman named Cho A Ra.¹¹⁸ Cho showed her the evidence of the violence, including bullet holes and blood stains running down the walls from the room above where dead bodies had been brought for safe keeping until family members could come and identify them. Cho also hosted a meeting between Wilson and a group of women and men who had heard of her visit to the YWCA and to tell her their stories in defiance of police threats. "I heard the most harrowing, harrowing story," recounts Wilson "You know," one mother told her, "I begged my son not to go downtown, but

¹¹⁶ Moon Byeonggi ed., *Missionary Gu Aeryeon Professor – 27 years a Canadian, 37 years a Korean* (Seoul: Doseochulpan Jeongdang, 1997), 16.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Lois Wilson 26 July 2018.

¹¹⁸ Memorandum from Ted S??t to Lois Wilson, dated 2 February 1981, File #8, Box#1, Accession #94.170C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

he said, no, this was critical.” The woman never saw him alive again. It was “the hardest pastoral visit I have ever done in my life,” said Wilson.¹¹⁹

Later, missionary Beecham would write to tell her what the visit had meant for many that she had met. “The Kwangju people were impressed with you and noted all the details of your visit -from your walking through the back alleys to whether you ate meat at the dinner to your willingness to talk at 5:30 AM any hour.”¹²⁰ But in her heart, Wilson had been full of trepidation. Partway through the trip she had been made aware of a KCIA agent tailing her.¹²¹ When she returned to her hotel room in Seoul, she received calls from the front desk asking where she had been. She was worried the authorities might not let her leave Korea. The danger was real. Though she did not know it at the time, those she had met in Kwangju would suffer severe consequences for speaking with her.¹²² Arriving at the airport, Wilson was filled with dread:

The last hurdle was to pass airport security when I left Seoul. In my shoe I had a list of political prisoners to give Amnesty International. In the pocket of my parka was the book listing the people I'd met illegally in the YWCA. If either of these were found, I would be detained without much thought for the niceties. When I finally reached my seat in the plane, I wept with relief.¹²³

Returning to Canada, Wilson responded to her experience with an invigorated interest in justice causes around the world. A special edition of the UCC's *Mission Magazine* was published under her direction later that year. Based on Wilson's first year as Moderator of the UCC, it included stories of Christian involvement in political struggles around the globe, the

¹¹⁹ Interview with Lois Wilson, 26 July 2018.

¹²⁰ Letter from Walter Beecham to Lois Wilson, dated 26 January 1981, File #8, Box#1, Accession #94.170C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹²¹ Interview with Lois Wilson, 26 July 2018.

¹²² One man who met Wilson in Kwangju and told her about the death of his son spend two years in prison as a result.

¹²³ Wilson, *Turning the World Upside Down*, 1989, 88.

largest allotment of space dedicated to Korea.¹²⁴ In her editorial remarks, Wilson suggested that what she experienced with churches overseas was connected to an important shift driven by the leadership of non-Western churches:

We live today in an age in which we, as church, are struggling to understand ourselves as “receivers,” as well as “givers” in the world Christian Community. We are beginning to understand that our relationship to sister churches and agencies does not turn on the axis of money or personnel alone. There is a growing awareness, arising out of the debris and disappointments of our North American life-style, that we have critical need of the gospel insights and Christian faithfulness of our partners overseas.

The comment reflects a profound personal transformation. Wilson had been deeply touched by the courage of people she had met in non-Western churches and nations. But the comment also echoes institutional rumblings that had been heard since the 1960s through such leaders as Wilna Thomas (chapter 2) and experienced in budget negotiations as had occurred between the UCC and the PROK in the 1970s (chapter 3). Wilson, in the 1980s, is still working out the *Report of the Commission on World Mission* published 16 years earlier. Wilson would say that she had learned a “great deal” in her first year as Moderator.¹²⁵ But it is interesting that the accumulation of such learnings by others in the church had not seem to have reached her before that.

On the other hand, what Wilson experienced had an intensity that was novel and signaled a new level of interaction with pressing postcolonial issues. Part of the explanation for the new intensity of these experiences is the degree to which, in the years since the 1974 consultation, women on the mission field had allowed themselves to be hosted in the intimate spaces of Korean women’s lives. This opened up a vivid new perspective on the world for Wilson and others. Wilson expressed to a group in Edmonton upon her return from Kwangju the fact that

¹²⁴ Mission Magazine, Faith and Justice: the Moderator’s Message, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1981, file 6, box 1, Accession # 94.170C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

¹²⁵ Mission Magazine, Faith and Justice: the Moderator’s Message, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1981, file 6, box 1, Accession # 94.170C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

this new perspective diverged significantly from the one presented in the mainstream media. She compared what she had learned of events at Kwangju to the story that she had read about the uprising in Times Magazine upon her return. “I am afraid, the only point of contact between what I had understood, and that account, was the fact that there had been something happen in Quonju.(sic),” she explained.¹²⁶ Fortunately, she did find some in the mainstream media who were open to the new perspective. On 12 October 1981, Maclean’s Magazine had published an article entitled “South Korea - Human Rights Aren’t in the Contract.” Information for that article came from UCC sources and Wilson wrote to thank the editor for his work, pointing out that the UCC information could be trusted because of its 100 year-long history of missions to Korea and the resultant relationships of trust with Koreans.¹²⁷ An essential part of that relationship, which Wilson had just experienced first hand and which had allowed her to share the horrors of the Kwangju Massacre with the wider world, was created in the renewed postcolonial context of women hosting women in the gendered *sarangbang* spaces of the Korean context.

Impact on the Canadian Church

When it comes to individual UCC missionaries and church leaders, it is clear that the women who serve as examples in this study were personally impacted by spaces held by Korean women or by encounters with Korean women which they themselves had hosted. Recently Wilson has wondered, however, if the connection she made in Korea had any impact on the wider UCC: “It influenced me. But I don’t know that it impacted the church. So I tried to spread

¹²⁶ Moderator’s Event in Edmonton 1981, Lois Wilson fonds, File #4, Box #1, Accesssion #2012.002C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

¹²⁷ Letter from Lois Wilson to the Editor Maclean’s Magazine, dated 15 October 1981, File 6, box 7, accession 89.143C, UCC Archives, Toronto

it abroad, but I don't know."¹²⁸ There is evidence that these personal transformations did indeed translate into opportunities for Canadian women to learn about and participate in the struggle for democracy occurring in South Korea. Writing in 1995 one UCC member noted that the links between women of the PROK and UCC were "especially meaningful" and had resulted in a number of undertakings by UCC women:

There are many UCC women who wear fish pins [symbols of solidarity with the Democratization Movement], write letters in support of political prisoners, and have made solidarity shawls. Women did much of the education during a recent Korea mission study year. United Church Women (UCW) are preparing prayer ribbons to contribute to the Jubilee year reunification effort. They have followed with interest and concern Korean women's research and action regarding women workers, prostitution and nuclear energy. There is a sense in which many feel a special relationship with women in the PROK.¹²⁹

But perhaps Wilson's concerns were not without reason. One further connection which was not mentioned above were the exchange programs, which were a feature of the relationship beginning in the 1970s and running through to the 1990s. On one of these exchanges two Korean women, Kim Jee Song and Kim Kyung Ja, visited Canada and had the following to say when asked what had surprised them most about what they had seen of the UCC: "Most of all, we were surprised at the activity of women... Here we found many women in headquarters and women elders and ministers... People accept these women's ideas as much as the men's. Women participate in all programs and express themselves clearly. That surprised us."¹³⁰ However when it came time to hear what the Korean women had to say, the visitors found the UCC was less open.

¹²⁸ Interview with Lois Wilson August 2018.

¹²⁹ Fred Bayliss, "United Church of Canada – Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea: from Past to Future," Mission consultation between the UCC and the PROK, August 16-18 August 1995, Academy House Seoul 1995, File 000748, Box 50, U of T Special Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto.

¹³⁰ Mission Magazine, South Korea: Challenge and Celebration, Vol. 8 No.1, 1984, File 000530, U of T Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto, 42.

When we came here, we had speeches prepared for the churches, and thought, ‘this is a good opportunity to share.’ But one lady stood up and said, ‘Share? Then why did you come here? We want to teach you.’ In two or three churches we had the same experience. This is an exchange program and so one party shouldn’t do all the talking. At least in Christ there shouldn’t be any discrimination.¹³¹

It seems that women in the UCC had still not learned the way of *sarangbang*.

Conclusion

The change wrought by *sarangbang* spaces on UCC missionary women Willa Kernen, Marion Pope and Marion Current and on the UCC Moderator Lois Wilson was profound. The *sarangbang* were a third space which women occupied in the Korean Democratization Movement. These spaces shaped their contribution and empowered them to voice experiences, concerns and goals that were both nationalist and feminist, and something more besides. In part, these spaces made it possible for women to contribute in an especially effective way to the political resistance against the oppressive South Korean military rule. Speaking specifically of the Christian community, Kernen noticed that Korean women had, in the struggle for democracy and human rights, “come into their own.” “Their success in many undertakings,” she said, “has done much to enhance their self image, as well as given them considerable respect from their male associates.”¹³² There is no question that this “third space” was transformative; it contributed to the Korean society and transformed the lives of individual Korean women as well. The testimonies of the UCC women to their own learnings underscore the fact that as foreign women they were also very much transformed by their involvement in this space.

¹³¹ Mission Magazine, South Korea: Challenge and Celebration, Vol. 8 No.1, 1984, File 000530, U of T Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto, 43.

¹³² Willa Kernen, “the Story of Lee Oo Chung,” no date, File 1, Box 75, UCLA Special Collection 358 Human Rights and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

The *sarangbang* encounters were a uniquely Christian iteration of the third space. The *sarangbang* was created through the interactions between Korean and missionary women, and it survived the interruptions and transformations of the missionary relationship wrought by war and modernization. This was an intimate space in which women hosted women, a space that was at once personal and political. Early on, Christian missionaries described the *sarangbang* as a place where conversions were made and Korean women were empowered. However, in the case of later missionaries at least, *sarangbang* spaces were just as if not more transformative for the missionaries. Indeed, the transformation of missionary women in these spaces is perhaps proportionate to the degree that they held an equal social position to the Koreans with whom they worked. Through the *sarangbang*, Canadian women were exposed to the Korean Democratization and Human Rights Movements. However, when meeting Korean women in Canada it seems many Canadians continued to be fettered by colonial prejudices. The *sarangbang* has, therefore, shed light on the impact of the Korean church on the UCC, but also upon the limits of that impact, especially when it comes to the Canadians in UCC pews.

Mission encounters are by definition intercultural and *sarangbang* encounters provide examples of female gendered interactions across cultural differences. As an environment that was intimate and emotionally secure, *sarangbang* as spaces held for women by women enabled an appreciation and exchange of cultural meanings which was different from what might have been possible in other environments. In the example of Sarangbang Church, Kernan was able to identify the value of Christian music derived, not from missionary hymn books, but from indigenous musical traditions in Korea. In the Victory Shawl project, Korean women were able to adopt a western cultural practice to communicate the meaning of their experiences of oppression and also something of their own history and culture to a western audience. Through

experiences such as Kwangju, Pope and Wilson learned the Korean tradition of direct democracy. There are many examples of such cultural exchanges and the direction of those exchanges went both ways.

Finally, as an approach to Mission history, the *sarangbang* has spotlighted the contribution of women to broader historical events. Without an appreciation of what occurred in the intimate, subversive and caring space of *sarangbang*, our knowledge of events such as the March 1 Declaration for National Salvation and of the Kwangju Massacre are incomplete. This chapter has filled some of the gaps.

CHAPTER 6

Seonguja: Korean Christians in the United Church of Canada Wilderness, 1965 to 1988

Since the 1970s I have participated in the multi-racial activities of the denomination [United Church of Canada]. I have been on many committees. Always I am told “you are the first ethnic minority to sit on this committee.” But wrestling with white people is not always pleasant. Once or twice I have felt like discontinuing my engagement. But I have thought that this is the pioneering work that an ethnic minority has to do and so have continued the difficult struggle. And I have always found this struggle difficult.¹

Sang Chul Lee, Sermon: Honest before God,
Toronto Korean United Church
25 January 1987

Introduction

In August 1988, the United Church of Canada (UCC) elected the Revd. Sang Chul Lee as its 32nd moderator, the first Asian (and second non-white person²) to hold the position of spiritual leader of Canada’s largest Protestant denomination. According to Hugh McCullum reporting for the *Observer*, members of the church saw Lee’s election as “further proof of the United Church’s desire to continue inclusivity, justice and reconciliation.”³ Lee had been born to refugee parents in Siberia and was twice over a refugee himself. He knew that members of the UCC liked to tell stories about immigrants in a certain way. Usually they would emphasize a reversal of fortune and highlight Canadian inclusivity and generosity, the stability and strength of

¹ Sang Chul Lee, *God, Humanity’s Hope* (Toronto: Grover Printing, 1989), 210.

² Wilbur Howard, a black man, was elected moderator in 1974.

³ Hugh McCallum, “Lee’s church: celebrate, not retreat”, *Observer*, September 1988, New Series Vol.52, No.3, 8.

their national and religious institutions, freedom from racial discrimination and the ability of all to advance in society. These stories abounded in Canadian society and are captured in the words of one migrant whose story was featured in the *Intercom*, a paper published by the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto that focussed on immigrant issues. “I do not regret coming to Canada! I had lost my home province to the East but had won a better homeland in the West!”⁴ But if this self-congratulatory tale was the story members of the UCC were telling themselves as they watched Lee’s installation as moderator, they were not hearing the stories that immigrants from Korea such as Lee had been telling the church for decades. The Korean immigrant’s story was more often a story of arduous postcolonial pathbreaking rather than generous Canadian accommodation. For Korean Christians in the UCC, they were also often stories of exhausting pioneering efforts to plant a non-western form of Christianity in rocky and unwelcoming soil, of survival in the wilderness of racism and of struggle against ongoing prejudicial patterns and attitudes. These stories were themselves closely connected to other stories about a historical missionary presence in their country of origin and a push and pull relationship within the context of colonialism and modernization. Overseas, the tides had turned; the missionary enterprise and the missionaries participating in it had been radically changed. But in Canada, church congregations dominated by a White Anglo membership were proving intransigent and unresponsive to the changing context.

The changing context for Canadian Protestant congregations starting in 1965, the very year Canada opened its doors to non-European immigration, included the beginning of a period that saw its membership and social influence wane. Canadian churches were not alone in this trend. Historians of religion have noticed the same phenomena in other

⁴ Otto Koepke, “The Tale of an Immigrant: The Unknown Shores I was Looking For,” *Intercom*, International institute of Metropolitan Toronto, September and October edition 1970.

Western nations and have written extensively on the topic. In line with much of the historiography to date, Canadian church historians, including Ramsey Cook, Phyllis Airhart, Brian Clarke, Stewart MacDonald, Nancy Christie, Michael Gauvreau, Kevin Flatt and others have sought to explain the decline in mainline Protestant churches in terms of broader social and theological shifts that originated in Western society. The story of Korean Christian migrants within the UCC raises the question of whether or not global events and the experiences of non-Western Christians may also have been an important indicator of a contextual shift leading to the marginalization of the Christian church in Western countries. More precisely, the difficulty established Western Christians had relating to non-Western Christian immigrants highlights the inability of the Protestant institutional church to respond to a global migration and non-Western religious perspectives. Did this have something to do with its decline? It is beyond the scope of this chapter to show that this was or was not the case. But the experiences of Korean Christians in the UCC that are related below do raise questions about how the majority White Christian membership were thinking about the change and how this may have influenced their decision to stay in church or leave. Religious historian Lynne Marks, for example, has shown that the efforts of churches in British Columbia to absorb Asians into their fold at the turn of the 20th century alienated some Whites and contributed to the low rates of church attendance and religious affiliation within the province.⁵ This chapter points to the possibility that, given the difficulties experienced by Korean-Canadian members of the UCC and the new inclusive direction taken by its Division of World Outreach which displaced traditional Canadian Protestant nationalist assumptions, such a

⁵ Lynne Marks, *Infidels and the Damn Churches: Irreligion and Religion in Settler British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 161ff.

line of inquiry might yield important insights into the relationship between race and religion in Canada.

The story of Korean immigration is not principally a story of Western church decline, however, but of church transformation as it was no longer a church made up solely of White English-speakers. Koreans and other non-Western migrants were themselves now a part of the Canadian Protestant church. Their voice from the 1960s on is the voice of that church. They represent a change in perspective, a change in theology and a change in worship practice in the UCC, if only a partial and incomplete one. This is an important moment that signals that entrenched Protestant nationalist assumptions of the UCC were being challenged from within.

The story of the immigration of Koreans into the UCC also dovetails with other, underexplored aspects of the Canadian Missionary Enterprise which had played such a significant role in Canadian society during the interwar period. Over the course of their work many missionaries had been changed by their interactions with the cultural other on the mission field and, particularly in the post-war period, returned to the Canadian church with lessons for Canadian Christians about new postcolonial possibilities and past colonial mistakes. In Canada, missionaries played a role in welcoming immigrants from countries where they had served. These same missionaries were regarded as important members of immigrant communities, able to communicate effectively with and act as a bridge between the newcomers and Anglo society. But missionaries in Canada did not seem to have the effect of making Canadian congregations and church institutions more welcoming places for non-Western Christians.

There is considerable archival material available to paint a picture of the experiences of newcomers and their interactions with the UCC. These are found in UCC documents but more importantly in the collections of sermons and other written materials created by Koreans for Koreans. In particular, the church magazine of the Toronto Korean United Church (TKUC) called *Seonguja* (translated as “Pioneer”) offers an intimate glimpse into the experiences of Korean Christians within a UCC congregation. But perhaps equally important for ascertaining the range of meanings that framed these experiences in the migrant Korean Christian community has been the ethnographic evidence collected in the course of this project. Interviews with Korean church leaders and congregation members provide a nuanced appreciation of the experiences in the Korean Christian community in Canada that linked the UCC’s missionary past with ongoing problems of non-white people within the Canadian church.

Beginning of the Korean-Canadian Church

The story of the Korean-Canadian Church begins in 1965. A warm summer day of that year a young Korean family boarded a plane in Seoul bound for British Columbia. The father was a young church minister ordained by the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) who was on his way to take up a new job at Steveston United Church in the city of Richmond. This did not represent the first time a minister had been called from an overseas mission field to serve a congregation in Canada. Already by this time the UCC had brought a number of ministers from Japan and Hong Kong to serve congregations of their own “ethnic groups.”⁶ But Sang Chul Lee was the first Korean minister to move to Canada to serve a church.

⁶ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 402.

What is more, he may represent the first non-white minister to be called to serve a white UCC congregation. In fact, Steveston United was not entirely white, but a congregation of English speakers near Vancouver that had, in a unique arrangement, merged with an established Japanese congregation. It was, in other words, a hybrid space where theological interpretations mixed and colonial hierarchies and power structures were contested and re-negotiated on an intimately local and personal level.

Steveston United had heard about Lee from his time studying as a UCC scholarship student at Union College in Vancouver between 1961 and 1964. Having been raised in colonial Manchuria under Japanese rule, Lee had been required, along with all the Korean children of his generation, to learn the colonizer's language. The congregation at Steveston needed someone who could preach and minister in both English and Japanese and, aware that Lee was competent in both, sent a request across the Pacific that he return to Canada and be their minister. Lee reports having felt ambivalent about the call, in part, it seems, because of the irony that he would be serving two colonial cultures which had contributed to the painful realities of Korea's modern history. His father-in-law encouraged him to accept the invitation, however, telling Lee that after so many years of missionaries coming to Korea, it was time for something different: It was Lee's turn to be "a Korean missionary to Canada."⁷

Coincidentally, Lee's return to Canada occurred just ahead of the first wave of Korean immigration into the country. In 1964, the year he had completed his studies and departed for Korea, there had been very few Koreans in Vancouver. Shortly after his return in 1965, however, a steady stream began to flow through the Vancouver airport.⁸ As a result, in 1966, while still serving the English and Japanese congregations, Lee found himself responsible for a

⁷ Lee and Weingartner, *The Wanderer*, 90.

⁸ Lee and Weingartner, *The Wanderer*, 93.

gathering of Koreans in the Steveston church building. Though many who arrived were not baptized, Lee's main objective was not to make new Christians. Lee was motivated, rather, by a need to provide a supportive community for the new immigrants. Koreans faced many challenges upon their arrival: from communicating in a new language, to learning new customs, to knowing what clothes to wear, to dealing with racist attitudes, to finding work in a society that did not recognize their expertise, to raising children in a new school system.⁹ The church was one of the only places where Koreans could understand what was said, and be understood in return.¹⁰ This sense of being understood had as much to do with shared experiences of migration as it had to do with language and cultural background. The fact that the church was an organization run by and for fellow Korean immigrants in the new land drew people in.

The influx of Korean immigrants to Canada was due to a major shift in Canadian immigration policy and a new immigration agreement between Canada and South Korea. In South Korea, a coup d'état in 1961 had brought to power an autocratic government with a strong agenda of economic development. In order to generate foreign capital, it had set out early in its rule to establish diplomatic relations with Canada and other countries that fought during the Korean War for the South under the UN flag. On 1 January 1963 Korean and Canadian embassies were established in their respective countries. The move corresponded with significant changes in Canadian immigration law. John Diefenbaker's government, in 1962, for example, had begun to introduce legislation to eliminate racial prejudice from the immigration

⁹ Irene Chungwha Lee, "Koreans in Canada" in *Mission Magazine, South Korea: Challenge and Celebration*, Vol. 8 No.1, 1984, File 000530, U of T Collection Human Rights in Korea, Toronto, 45; Nancy E. Hardy, "A Challenge," *Mission Magazine* Vol. 8, No. 1, 1984; K Seang, "Life that Starts Again," *Seonguja – People Restarting*, No. 4, April 1971; H.P.O. "Life that Starts Again," *Seonguja – People Restarting*, No. 4, April 1971; W.H.S., "Life that Starts Again," *Seonguja – People Restarting*, No. 4, April 1971; Cho Seong-jun, "Life that Starts Again," *Seonguja – People Restarting*, No. 4, April 1971; Interview with Jeong Hakpil, 18 November 2018.

¹⁰ Interview with Richard Choe Nov 14 2018.

act. This new direction culminated in 1966 with the “points system” introduced by Lester Pearson’s government, which was, on the surface at least, about erasing race as a factor from the immigrant selection process.¹¹ The government in Seoul headed by military-general-turned-President Park Chung Hee was eager to send Koreans abroad to earn foreign currency. They seized the opportunity presented by these changes and dispatched Trade Minister Jeon Taek Bo to work out an immigration agreement with the Canadian government. Jeon’s assignment to this file may have had something to do with the fact that he had been a student in a UCC mission school and had known UCC missionaries in northeastern Korean and Manchuria prior to the war. Jeon successfully negotiated the Canadian-South Korean immigration agreement circa 1966¹² and was directly responsible for the first wave of Korean immigrants into Canada, many of them hand-picked from among the families he had known through Christian circles connected to the UCC Korea Mission.¹³

The connection between the first Korean immigrants to Canada and the UCC Korea Mission was particularly apparent in Toronto at the church to which Sang Chul Lee was later called in 1969. This point was brought home to me in an interview with one of the earliest members of the Toronto congregation, Jeong Hakpil. Jeong had come to Canada as a direct result of a personal connection with Jeon Taek Bo. Jeong had initially struggled hard to get his credentials recognized in Canada and had suffered for a number of years before landing a job at the University of Toronto under a man who was himself an immigrant from India and understood

¹¹ Reg Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration policy since Confederation* (Toronto: Department of Political Science York University, 1991), 18-19.

but was fundamentally a self-interested move in support of an expansionary economy in which more immigration was needed to fill skilled labour, technical, and professional jobs.

¹² History of the Fifteen Years of the Toronto Korean United Church Editorial Committee, *History of the Fifteen Years of the Toronto Korean United Church* (Toronto: Sseon Printers, 1982), 11.

¹³ Interview with Jeong Hakpil, 18 November 2018.

the situation Jeong was in. As we sat down to talk over a Tim Hortons coffee, Jeong's eyes sparkled as he related with pride his roots in norther Korea. He explained to me that just about every member of the first Korean congregation in Toronto was from the northeastern provinces of Korea and across the border in Manchuria, the areas covered almost exclusively by Canadian missionaries from the UCC. Jeong had maintained a connection with North Korea and through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s had returned there often to visit his hometown and family. This connection was important to him and I got the impression that he relished the opportunity to challenge a Canadian's assumptions about contemporary life and government in the North. For him, the connection with other Koreans from the northeast of the peninsula was an important aspect of life at TKUC.¹⁴

Jeong's feelings were clearly shared by others. Richard Choe is another interviewee whose perspective, though different on account of his age when he immigrated, echoes Jeong's. Choe grew up in the Toronto congregation and eventually went on to be ordained in the UCC. He has had experience at all levels of church governance and is currently serving a congregation north of Toronto. We met in a mall to conduct the interview. Choe was eager to share his experience with me and trusted me enough to be emotionally vulnerable in the telling of his story. His vulnerability in sharing seemed to be a theme in his family's story of migration as well. Choe was a youth when his family was forced to flee South Korea. His father had been a senior military officer under the Park regime and had fallen out with his superiors. He was not Christian, but he was well educated and originally from the northeast of Korea. It was this northeastern identity which drew him to TKUC. As in Vancouver, many non-Christians attended TKUC because it was a place to meet other Koreans; it was a community centre of all

¹⁴ Interview with Jeong Hakpil, 18 November 2018.

the new arrivals.¹⁵ Likewise, a diversity of religious backgrounds characterized the congregation. But as later waves of South Koreans arrived in Toronto, a unifying identity marker of the TKUC congregation was that it continued to be a place where Koreans originally from North Korea and Manchuria felt at home. Koreans from the north shared an extra layer of experience with one another. They had all been internal refugees within South Korea following the war. And they were all easily distinguished from Koreans from the south of the peninsula by their accent.¹⁶ In South Korea this meant they were often discriminated against. Korean refugees from the north also tended to share a political outlook distinct from that of their compatriots in South Korea, more open to socialist ideas despite their direct experience of life under Kim Il-Sung's dictatorial version of communist rule. Those who found their way to TKUC were often well educated as well. The church was one of the only places where it was possible for them to engage in intellectual conversation about the world and politics. These were important facts that shaped the Toronto church community.¹⁷

When Moon Chai Rin (featured in Chapter 1) along with his wife Kim Shin Mook, arrived in Toronto in 1973, he met so many people he had known in Manchuria that he said "it was like going to church in my hometown."¹⁸ Clearly it was a good feeling for him to come halfway around the world and find himself among so many familiar and cherished faces. The Toronto congregation, before Sang Chul Lee, even had a connection to the leader who had converted the village of Myeongdong to Christianity. David Chung (Jeong Daeui), the son of the first Christian principal of the school in Moon's hometown, served as TKUC's minister in 1968

¹⁵ *History of the Fifteen Years of the TKUC*, 13.

¹⁶ Interview with Richard Choe Nov 14 2018.

¹⁷ Interview with Richard Choe Nov 14 2018.

¹⁸ Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006), 273.

before taking a job as professor of religion at Carlton University in Ottawa.¹⁹ Moon also reported that many of the people at TKUC had come to Canada because of the connection to Canadian missionaries.²⁰ The connection of the congregation to the northeast of Korea and to its status as a UCC congregation was fused and reinforced by a shared missionary history.

TKUC, the first Korean church in Toronto, had been established in 1967, but quickly split into two congregations. The reasons for this split were complex, but Moon says that TKUC had a more “interdenominational” approach while the splinter group was more committed to its Presbyterian roots.²¹ The controversy about the denominational affiliation had been debated by the first Koreans in Toronto from the moment the idea of a Korean church was discussed. Most of the early Korean Christian immigrants had been from one of a number of Presbyterian denominations in Korea (including the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) with which the UCC had been in close relationship since the close of the Korean War 1953). There was no equivalent of the UCC in Korea. Missionaries had tried to organize a single denomination for the Korean church in the early 1900s, but with no success. Koreans preferred to stick with the denominational diversity due in part to a sense of loyalty to the missionaries who worked with them and in part because a decentralized church was more effective in resisting the Japanese colonial government (see chapter 1).

As a Yongjeong native, Moon Chai Rin discovered when he arrived in Toronto that many of the UCC missionaries who had served in northeastern Korea and Manchuria were still alive

¹⁹ History of the Fifteen Years of the Toronto Korean United Church Editorial Committee, *History of the Fifteen Years of the Toronto Korean United Church*, (Toronto: Sseon Printers, 1982), 20.

²⁰ Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006), 276.

²¹ Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006), 275.

and were serving the Korean immigrants in Canada.²² The Revd. W.A. Burbidge, for example, who had worked for the UCC Korea Mission in northeastern Korea, had been active since his return to Canada supporting the few Koreans immigrants living in Toronto and Hamilton. When the influx of Koreans arrived in 1966, the UCC Board of Home Missions responded quickly by forming the “Ad Hoc Committee to Consider Ministry to Korean Christians in Toronto and Hamilton Area” which included Burbidge and a few local Koreans.²³ A meeting of the wider Korean community was then called to discuss the beginning of a Korean congregation. Burbidge and Korean theology student Bak Jae Bong, who was in Toronto on a UCC scholarship at Emmanuel College, were assigned to lead the new church.²⁴ Its first worship service was held on 23 April 1967 in St. Luke’s United Church chapel. David Chung took over from Burbidge and Bak on 26 June 1968.²⁵ In the first two years of its existence, however, a group of more staunch Presbyterians had decided to break with TKUC and form their own congregation. Not long after, and following the departure of David Chung, TKUC reached out to Sang Chul Lee and asked him to come fill the position of minister hoping that he might bring some stability to their divided community.

The Pioneer Magazine - *Seonguja*^{vi}

After four years of ministry in Vancouver, Sang Chul Lee accepted a call to serve the fledgling TKUC. In his inaugural sermon on the Sunday of 3 August 1969 Lee opened with the news of the historic Apollo mission and Armstrong’s first moonwalk which had taken place a

²² Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeewi Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006), 276.

²³ *History of the Fifteen Years of the TKUC*, 13.

²⁴ *History of the Fifteen Years of the TKUC*, 16.

²⁵ *History of the Fifteen Years of the TKUC*, 21.

little more than a week earlier. It was a new age, he told his parishioners, where new things were possible. What was needed was humility, courage and hope to leave the old things behind while learning new things to meet novel challenges that lay ahead.²⁶ He did not waste time in introducing the congregation to his theological commitments. On the first Sunday of the very next month he preached about the mission of the church, that it was not to extract people from society, but to permeate society with a sense of human empathy. Sometimes, he advised, this meant that the church needed to involve itself in politics and concern itself with economics. “As an immigrant church,” he explained, “we have first hand experience of certain social problems (racism, culture shock, conflict of values, family problems, problems of independence, and problem of participation in society) and as a church we are called to address them as part of our mission.”²⁷

Lee’s approach went beyond words from the pulpit and included concrete acts of engaging with, and of actively encouraging the engagement of the members of his congregation with, the wider UCC. The couple James and Seong-suk Chong met me in the basement of their church to share with me their story of the early years of TKUC. James was excited to be able to talk about the church. It was something he felt very strongly about. Seong-suk was more reticent, insisting that she had very little to contribute. Both were very kind and generous with their time. One of the most compelling memories was shared by Seong-suk who remembered Sang Chul Lee had approached her one day to tell her that the regional church was looking for a representative to sit on the United Church Women (UCW) committee. Seong-suk, who was unsure of her English and had had little interaction with members of the English church, was reluctant. But Lee insisted. Likewise, James was tapped to serve at the presbytery, a regional level of church

²⁶ Yi Sang-cheol, *Hananimi Inryueui heuimang* (Toronto: Grover Printing, 1989), 14.

²⁷ Yi Sang-cheol, *Hananimi Inryueui heuimang* (Toronto: Grover Printing, 1989), 21.

government. The two expressed great pride in the congregation under Lee's leadership, listing a number of community organizations that served the Korean community that were initiated by leadership from TKUC. These included the Korean community choir, a seniors organization called Samaritans, the Hope Broadcast (a Korean language program on the radio) and the Korean Business Association of Toronto.²⁸

With this vision of the potential contribution of the Korean church to Canadian society and of the need for Koreans to engage with all levels of Canadian society, Lee set out to launch a monthly magazine to be published by the congregation and touching on topics connected to immigrant life. He explained the reason for this move in his first editorial:

As we live life in this strange land, often experiencing loneliness, there is little that we are as grateful for as "news." In the midst of the problems of life we face day after day thinking of one another, the news we share is very precious. The reason is that this kind of news permits us to feel sympathy and encourages us to find a way to solve our problems together. Also from time to time the exchange of opposing opinions actually helps us to prosper.²⁹

Called *Seonguja*,³⁰ meaning "pioneer," the magazine ran for eight years and offers a detailed glimpse into the experiences and thoughts of Canada's first Korean immigrants, touching on many aspects of their lives.

For Lee the idea for the title of the magazine may have been connected to his experience growing up in Siberia and Manchuria. Korean families had been pioneers there in much the same way early European migrants to Canada had been. Lee may have chosen this title to connect Korean experiences in Canada to an iconic North American pioneer history and thus to

²⁸ Interview with James and Seong-suk Chong, 16 November 2018.

²⁹ Sang Chul Lee, "Editor's Note," *Seonguja – First Publication*, No.1, April 1970.

³⁰ 先驅者 - 선구자

help them to locate themselves within Canadian history in this way.³¹ “The pioneers of any nation or group to the next generations are always much respected and the ‘details of their lives’ are collected as a model of all future generations,” he explained, perhaps holding both the Manchurian and Canadian in mind at the same time.³² Explicitly, Lee focused on the importance for Korean immigrants to think of future generations, a consideration which constitutes “the character of a great pioneer.” Koreans, he felt, should embrace the new land as their home and “lay a prudent and foundational life” for the generations to come.³³ For Lee, Canada was not a place where Koreans would simply sojourn and then return to the motherland, but a new home where they would have to break ground and put down roots.

Most of the contributions for the magazine were solicited from members of the church. Sometimes material came from outside the Korean community, from UCC church leaders, government officials or experts on a given topic. This material was always translated. While the magazine had a readership beyond the congregation and even beyond the Christian community, it is unlikely that anyone outside the Korean community would have been able to read its contents, save the returned missionaries. This created a special space for Koreans to voice opinions, experiences and thoughts that they may not have felt comfortable sharing with others. The magazine gives evidence of a strong critique of Canadian society, but there is little evidence to suggest that that critique was presented outside the Korean community in the same form and tone. There is clear evidence, however, that leaders in the Korean Christian community were raising concerns with the Canadian church as they struggled to find a place for themselves and

³¹ Lee and his community were aware of and sensitivity to indigenous issues stemming from their unfair treatment in the history of Canada and its expansion westward. It does not occur to him here, however, to qualify this analogy in light of these issues.

³² Sang Chul Lee, “Details of the Life of a Pioneer,” *Seonguja – First Publication*, No.1, April 1970

³³ Sang Chul Lee, “Details of the Life of a Pioneer,” *Seonguja – First Publication*, No.1, April 1970

their congregants within its organization and culture. *Seonguja* was a place where those concerns could be aired and worked out among Koreans.

In the words of one of the magazine's first contributors, the job before the Korean community in Canada was akin to making "the dry land a land of plenty."³⁴ For all the opportunities that the new life in Canada offered them, there were certainly challenges. One theme that ran through the pages of *Seonguja* was the issue of racism. The second addition of *Seonguja* was dedicated to "Seeking a Korean-Canadian Identity" and tackled the problem of racism head on in many of its contributions. Sang Chul Lee opened the issue with an explanation of the contrasting "melting pot" and "mosaic" approaches to immigrants taken by the U.S.A and Canada respectively. "Sometimes there are assumptions in America that the descendants of the minority groups need to be 150% American," and that this would result in "ethnic minorities losing their identity and becoming marginal." On the other hand, the "Mosaic Society" idea was more positive, but more difficult. "It is not easy for one community to have many different peoples clearly asserting themselves," he said. The danger was that "it becomes a 'vertical mosaic' with some pieces affixed to the bottom and some to the top," he explained, referring to sociologist John Porter's iconic 1965 work that revealed the reality of racism below the veneer of Canadian mosaic ideology.³⁵ "So we have to find our Korean identity within this land," Lee urged.³⁶

In support of this idea, Lee solicited the contribution of a former UCC missionary, W. A. Burbidge. Burbidge encouraged his Korean audience by telling them he believed they had much

³⁴ Jin-shil, "How Must We Live in This Land?," *Seonguja – Seeking a Korean-Canadian Identity*, No.2 October 1970, Seeking a Korean-Canadian Identity, 20.

³⁵ Sang Chul Lee, "Editor's Note," *Seonguja – Seeking a Korean-Canadian Identity*, No.2 October 1970; John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

³⁶ Sang Chul Lee, "Editor's Note," *Seonguja – Seeking a Korean-Canadian Identity*, No.2 October 1970.

to contribute to Canada and to Christianity in Canada by virtue of the unique cultural roots that shaped their culture and their faith.³⁷ He told them that their presence in Canada was not only good for them but good for Canada, too. But he warned, “In Canada you will have to overcome ethnic discrimination, nationalism, alcoholism and drug addiction, poverty and these may seem like giants to face. But I believe we can overcome them with our courage. Especially you need to contribute to the elimination of ethnic discrimination.”³⁸

Seonguja sought input from the Japanese community, too. The Japanese congregations had a longer history in Canada than the Koreans, but also one that was fraught with tensions. Japanese immigration to British Columbia had started in the early 1900s. A Japanese minister named Hwan Jim-mu told of the influence of the Black community in North American in shaping the Japanese-Canadian approach to racial discrimination. “It cannot be kept a secret that over the past number of years the white race has been forcing its culture on coloured races,” he wrote, “White people always think that if you live in North America you must adapt to white ways for things to go well with you” and he pointed to beliefs in the church that “Christianity is white culture and that anyone who wants to become Christian needs to adopt that culture.” But, prophetically for the purposes of this dissertation, he countered that if Japanese and Korean people could understand their culture correctly it would be a benefit, not only for them, but for North American society as well.³⁹ This contribution is an interesting example of relationship building between people of Korean and Japanese background. There is evidence that Koreans and Japanese found it easier to work together in the Canadian context than in the Asian one.

³⁷ Burbidge, “Our Expectations for Korean Canadians,” *Seonguja*, No.2 October 1970, Seeking a Korean-Canadian Identity.

³⁸ Burbidge, “Our Expectations for Korean Canadians,” *Seonguja*, No.2 October 1970, Seeking a Korean-Canadian Identity.

³⁹ Hwan Jim-mu, “A Japanese Minister in Canada,” trans. Han Kang-yeon, *Seonguja*, No.2 October 1970, Seeking a Korean-Canadian Identity.

Most of the Japanese in Canada would have been second or third generation, distanced from the colonial history of Japan and themselves victims of the Pacific War and the colonial attitudes and policies of the Canadian state. In this sense, they shared something in common with the more recently arrived Korean immigrants. It seems that the Japanese-speaking Sang Chul Lee, at any rate, was not above asking for Japanese input for his Church magazine.

Many who wrote for *Seonguja* found that racism was a harsh reality in Canada. It could make finding a job very difficult and negatively impact their self-confidence.⁴⁰ Some of them applied their considerable education and understanding of the historical context to analyse the situation. The most biting criticism of Canadian society as racist came from two members of TKUC who attended a Heritage Ontario event called “Unity through Diversity” that took place in the Skyline Hotel between 2 and 4 June 1972.⁴¹ Park Eun-myeong reported that organizers of the event seemed to feel that since the British (and French) had come before other immigrants, they deserved a privileged place at the Unity through Diversity conference and in Canadian society generally. Faced with criticism about their presumed privilege, he noticed, these same people protested that they were just ordinary Canadians, the same as others, and disliked being labelled Anglo Saxon or WASP. “I don’t know if the British people’s claim to be the same was sincere,” wrote Park sarcastically.⁴²

Another TKUC member who attended the event was very critical of the Canadian Government’s Multiculturalism Policy.⁴³ Jeon Chung-lim complained that the policy’s

⁴⁰W.H.S., “Life That Starts Again,” *Seonguja – People Restarting*, No. 4, April 1971.

⁴¹ Park Eun-myeong, “Impression after having Participated in Heritage Ontario,” *Seonguja – Complex Cultural Society and the Race Problem*, No.8, October 1972.

⁴² Park Eun-myeong, “Impression after having Participated in Heritage Ontario,” *Seonguja – Complex Cultural Society and the Race Problem*, No.8, October 1972.

⁴³ Jeon Chung-lim, “Pessimism about the Canadian Government’s Multiculturalism Policy,” *Seonguja – Complex Cultural Society and the Race Problem*, No.8, October 1972.

vagueness benefitted the ruling class. “We can’t forget how the indigenous people have suffered from the English colony,” he cautioned,

English colonial rule was skillful. We have to acknowledge that in addition to economics and trade and military force and medicine they even used religion, specifically the Christian religion in their invasion policy. What they did is the same as the Japanese did to us. Their international policy is to separate tribe and nations from one another. Look at India that was under their rule for 400 years and now has been divided into three pieces with the shedding of much blood.⁴⁴

Jeon pointed out that minority communities were not the beneficiaries of the “enlightened” policies of the colonial state such as multiculturalism, but rather that they had earned their rights through political organizing. He offered as an example Quebec’s achievement of language rights. Jeon urged solidarity among minority groups as a way of avoiding “the furnace” of the North American melting pot.⁴⁵

While Park and Jeon were venting their anger at the perceived hypocrisy of the Heritage Ontario event, nationally the UCC was taking steps to come to terms with the issue through a World Council of Churches (WCC) initiative called “The Program to Combat Racism.” The stated goals of this initiative were to confront racism anywhere in the world. However, the issue as the UCC understood it was particularly framed by the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Consequently, the focus tended to be directed outward, to the problems of other nations. The UCC thus failed to see the problems within Canada and within itself. A sign of this was the fact that the UCC’s Division of World Outreach (DWO) were most involved in rolling out this program. The DWO was the branch of the UCC bureaucracy with oversight of missionaries and relations with overseas churches, meaning that domestic aspects of the church were little affected

⁴⁴ Jeon Chung-lim, “Pessimism about the Canadian Government’s Multiculturalism Policy,” *Seonguja – Complex Cultural Society and the Race Problem*, No.8, October 1972.

⁴⁵ Jeon Chung-lim, “Pessimism about the Canadian Government’s Multiculturalism Policy,” *Seonguja – Complex Cultural Society and the Race Problem*, No.8, October 1972.

by the anti-racism initiative.⁴⁶ It is likely that the Anglo UCC was in denial of the realities of racism in Canada. There were programs for UCC members however to learn about racism and one of these was attended by TKUC member, Cho Seongju. This was a conference called “Multicultural Society and Racial Problems” offered by the Educational Committee of the UCC at the Cedar Glen Retreat Centre located to the north of Toronto from 25 to 26 August 1972.⁴⁷ If Cho’s report in *Seongjuja* about the event is anything to go by, however, there was little by way of real analysis of racism presented to participants. His report from the event was lacking in critical insight and included such advice as “individually we need to do our best to shine so that others form a positive impression of the ‘Korean image’” and “we have to raise our kids well.”⁴⁸ These were clearly not lessons that challenged the structural whiteness of the UCC or Canadian society. Rather, it seemed to Cho that it was best for Koreans to try to make a good impression and not draw negative attention.

Notwithstanding the inadequacy of this approach which placed responsibility for the elimination of racism on the shoulders of immigrants, some in the Korean community embraced their own agency as individuals and as a minority group to promote a multicultural society by avoiding the temptation to retreat into a cultural ghetto. Ok Yeongju, for example, exhorted her community not to be discouraged because their skin colour is different. “US, Canada, Australia and even UK are mixed nations,” she said, and “whether we like it or not we have a heavy

⁴⁶ Letter to Member Churches from the World Council of Churches, dated 12-23 August 1968, GC mins, exec and sub-exec 1968-70, file 1, box 32, Accession #82.001C, UCC Archives, Toronto; The Program to Combat Racism, The Executive [of General Council], dated 20-23 November 1972, file SII Minutes 1971-1974, box 33, Accession #82.001C, UCC Archives, Toronto; Report of the Sessional Committee on the Program to Combat Racism, The Executive [of General Council], dated 20-23 November 1978, file SII Minutes 1974-1984, box 34, Accession #82.001C, UCC Archives, Toronto.

⁴⁷ Cho Seongjun, “The Problem of Racism: Report from an Educational Conference,” *Seongjuja – Complex Culture Society and the Race Problem*, No.8, October 1972

⁴⁸ Cho Seongjun, “The Problem of Racism: Report from an Educational Conference,” *Seongjuja – Complex Culture Society and the Race Problem*, No.8, October 1972

responsibility to develop this society.” She was disappointed that the Korean language newspaper was vigorously promoting the need to build a Korea Town in Toronto. “In a mixed society do we want to carve out an exclusively Korean space?” she asked.⁴⁹ Her minister, Sang Chul Lee, was unequivocal, “If we are not going to resign ourselves to life of simply eating and making money then we have to, as a people of one culture and tradition, find a way to make human connections with people of other cultures and also take an interest in this country’s culture and social policies.”⁵⁰

Lee did not minimize the responsibility of white Canadians and UCC members for racial prejudices and policies. He and his family had had to face their fair share of racism.⁵¹ But he did want to instill a sense of agency and responsibility in his flock. Lee and other Korean church leaders in Canada did their best to lead by example. Lee’s approach contributed to the special ethos of the TKUC congregation and underscores the fact that Korean Christians within the UCC were making intentional efforts to engage with and shape UCC culture and politics. Their experiences engaging the UCC on Canadian soil are enlightening and speak both to their determination and resilience in the face of intransigent colonial attitudes in UCC church pews and governing structures. Below, I turn my attention to examining the experience of three Korean church leaders who worked with and within UCC structures.

Korean church leadership in the UCC:

Sang Chul Lee

⁴⁹ Oh Yeong-ju, “Planting a Woman’s Dream in a New Land,” *Seonguja - Women and Life in the New Land*, No. 5, July 1971.

⁵⁰ Lee Sang Chul, “Editor’s Preface,” *Seonguja – Complex Cultural Society and the Race Problem*, No.8, October 1972.

⁵¹ Story in Wanderer and other examples?

Sang Chul Lee came to play one of the most important roles of any leader in the Korean UCC community. Lee's earliest opportunity to work with the UCC hierarchy came in 1972, when he was asked to serve on the executive of the DWO, the unit in the UCC polity entrusted with, among other things, the deployment and oversight of missionaries outside Canada. The invitation was likely due in large part to critical developments of the UCC Korea Mission connected to political events (discussed in chapters 2 through 5), events which were drawing missionaries into the South Korean Democratization Movement. Lee had many personal connections with Korean church leaders in the PROK who were taking an active role in the opposition to the Park dictatorship. As minister of TKUC, Lee was very concerned about these developments and had kept them in front of his congregation despite objections from some members uncomfortable with the mix of religion and politics.

Lee made sure that TKUC served as an important source of news about home for his congregants and offered a means for the expat community to comment on developments.⁵² Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, TKUC members and leadership were kept engaged in the democratization and minjung movements in South Korea and participated in actions against the South Korean government and in support of activists. On 20 July 1974, in protest against the executions of eight men falsely accused by the KCIA of organizing a communist plot to overthrow the South Korean government (the PRP incident discussed in chapter 5), a number of members from the TKUC congregation went to Ottawa to protest in front of the South Korean Embassy.⁵³ Members were involved in protests in Toronto at various important moments such as in the aftermath of the March 1 Declaration for National Salvation in 1976 and the Kwangju

⁵² Interview with Richard Choe Nov 14 2018.

⁵³ Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006), 301.

Massacre (also discussed in chapter 5).⁵⁴ TKUC brought prominent leaders in the South Korean movement to Toronto and hosted speaking engagements for them. Ham Seok Heon, Yi Munyeong, Suh Nam Dong, Yi Haedong, Moon Dong Hwan, Lee Oo Chung, and Han Wansang were among those who spoke at the congregation.⁵⁵ Kim Dae Jung (who became the president of South Korea in 1998) was also invited, but prevented by South Korean government from travelling to Canada. Sang Chul Lee was able to go back and forth between Canada and Korea often and served as a bridge of information. This practice helped his congregants to feel a part of what was happening.⁵⁶ In 1975, the DWO had tapped Lee and his father-in-law, Kim Chai Choon (who by this time had sought refuge from KCIA harassment in Canada,) to represent the UCC at a secret consultation hosted by the WCC. This consultation sought to explore ways that the global ecumenical organization could support Christian activists and turned out to be pivotal in the struggle for democracy and human rights in South Korea.⁵⁷ This role earned Lee respect in UCC circles and in that same year his contribution to the UCC was recognized by his election to President of Toronto Conference, an important regional governing body within the national UCC structure. In 1988, largely on the strength of these credentials, Lee would be elected moderator for the national church. Lee's leadership was tested as moderator. He had to deal with the fallout of the UCC decision to permit the ordination of Gay and Lesbian ministers, a controversial decision that created great tension in the church. He proved himself equal to the

⁵⁴ Yi Munsuk, *Yi Ujeong Pyeongjip* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2012), 223.

⁵⁵ Moon Chai Rin and Kim Shin Mook, *Kiringapiwa Komannyeui Goom: Moon Chai Rin Kim Shin Mook* (Seoul: Samin Books, 2006), 301; Poster "the recently quelled rebellion in Kwangju...", File: DWO Human Rights, Box #23 of 34, Accession #83.019C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

⁵⁶ Interview with Richard Choe, 14 Nov 2018.

⁵⁷ Kim Heung-su, "Hanguk minjuhwakidokjadongjihoieui kyeolseonggwa hwaldong," *Hangukkidokkyowa yeoksa*, September 2009, Vol. 9.

task. And the indigenous congregations of the UCC, who were also positively affected by his ministry, recognized his accomplishments by honouring him with the title of “rainbow chief.”

From the beginning of his time in Canada, Lee was attuned to issues of cultural and national identity. His experience as minister at the Steveston UC congregation in British Columbia drove home lessons he had learned growing up in Manchuria about the importance of culture and language.⁵⁸ The experience of working with both Japanese and Korean migrant communities instilled in him a deep appreciation for Canada’s policy of bilingualism, and beyond that for the place of all language traditions practiced on Canadian soil, from indigenous languages to those of the newest immigrants. “[W]hen Prime Minister Trudeau first introduced multiculturalism as an official government policy,” wrote Lee, “I thought I could teach him a lot about the subject.”⁵⁹ Lee’s interest in language rights highlights two significant failings of the Canadian church with which the UCC was just starting to come to terms in in the 1970s and 1980s, its marginalization of its French minority and its history of residential schools. From Church Union in 1925, francophone members of the United Church had been largely forgotten, their congregations ignored and their educational institutions left without support.⁶⁰ In the same way, the history of residential schools implicated the UCC in the project of cultural genocide, the erasure of indigenous culture and language.⁶¹ With the influx of ethnic minorities following the liberalization of immigration laws in the 1960s, the accommodation of language was one area in which the UCC was especially pressed. Its inability to embrace different linguistic traditions

⁵⁸ Lee and Weingartner, *The Wanderer*, 52.

⁵⁹ Lee and Weingartner, *The Wanderer*, 96.

⁶⁰ “Histoire des franco-protestants,” *Aujourd’hui Crédo: la revue francophone et œcuménique de l’Église Unie*, Janvier-Février 2014.

https://egliseunie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Aujourd’hui_Credo_2014_Histoire-des-franco-protestants.pdf viewed 12 March 2020.

⁶¹ J.R. Miller, *Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 3, 246.

speaks to the Protestant nationalist vision of its Anglo founders. Lee worked to explain why this was a serious problem for the church.

Lee's early experiences with Canadian congregations and their attitudes towards overseas mission work had disturbed him as well. As a student in BC in the 1960s, Lee had found UCC congregations saw in him little more than a poster boy for the missionary enterprise, using him to raise money for the cause. Requests by local churches to have him come and speak left him in a "very awkward position." Though Lee genuinely appreciated the positive things missionaries had done for Korea and for himself personally, he was not about to "sing their praises without qualification."⁶² Particularly it was the sense that his culture was not being properly valued and the assumption by Canadians that Koreans were little more than empty vessels into which they could pour their western religion and values. As moderator from 1988 to 1990, Lee was still trying to explain to white UCC members why this was not a helpful way to look at things.

In a sermon entitled "Witnesses to the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth," Lee informed his congregation that Koreans had something to share when it came to their faith:

We are minorities who have come to North America. We are living in the land of the first people who brought us the gospel. Thanks to these people spreading the gospel we are Christian. When we moved here, we brought our faith. ... We have developed a Koreanized Christianity which we now reexport. This reexported Christianity and the local Christianity do not have to be the same or relate to one another without friction. In fact, sometimes they seem to be in collision.⁶³

Part of what Lee saw as the strength of Korean Christianity was its experience as a minority faith, rather than a religious norm with a privileged place guaranteed by society. At the 17th Annual Meeting of the Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America in 1983, he presented a paper called "Unique Roles of the Korean Ethnic Church for the North American

⁶² Lee and Weingartner, *The Wanderer*, 86.

⁶³ Yi Sang-cheol, *Hananimi Inryueui heuimang* (Toronto: Grover Printing, 1989), 91-92.

Host Church.” “Christianity in Korea was originally introduced by Americans and Canadians,” he said, “but as the Korean Christian community moved into America and Canada, there began a movement of reverse missionary work” based on their own experiences and insights as Christians. Korean Christians, “have learnt how to survive as a minority. They have also learnt how to become a creative minority.” The church in Korea, after all had always been a minority religion. This had not stopped it from having a vibrant life or from making a contribution to Korean society. What’s more, the Minjung theology, which was at this time emerging from Korea, was explaining how the Christian identity itself was malleable and, that in the present era, it could no longer profess to hold an exclusive view of religion or monopoly on salvation. These were things, Lee said, that the post-Christendom church in America and Canada now had to learn how to do.⁶⁴

In the meantime, Lee was doing his best to raise a new generation of Korean leaders at TKUC. There were many young Koreans who were drawn to the congregation for various reasons. Some of them had come to church with their families where they found a special home among north Koreans and a springboard for activities in the broader Canadian society.⁶⁵ Others were grateful to find a comfortable ethnic niche from which to continue to serve the Korean church within Canadian society and even to participate in the struggles of Korean democratization from outside of Korea. Unique among these young people was a young man who, like Lee himself, had been a refugee twice in his life. Also like Lee, he was both animated by the ethos of the UCC and determined to change it. We turn to his story now.

⁶⁴ 17th Annual Meeting of the Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America “Minjung Theology and Korean Immigrants”, 26-27 May 1983, File 32, Box 26, UCLA Special Collection 358 Democracy and Unification in Korea, Los Angeles.

⁶⁵ Interview with Richard Choe, 14 November 2018.

Dong-Chun Seo

Dong-Chun Seo (Seo Dong-cheon) has had a long career in the UCC. Ordained in 1987, he served congregations in Alberta and Ontario. He is currently a minister at a congregation in Toronto, but even before he was ordained, he served the TKUC congregation and the wider UCC church with energy and determination. As we sat down together for the interview, he smiled readily and our conversation stretched on for close to two hours. Not only did Seo have information to share about events in the past, he has spent time thinking deeply about the things he had learned and experienced in the UCC. He was particularly interested in the place of “ethnic” groups and people within the Anglo-dominant institution.

Seo was born in northeastern Korea just prior to the Korean war. His grandfather had worked with the Canadian Presbyterian missionaries (before the creation of the UCC) in Hamkyeong Buk Do, the most north-easterly province of Korea, before moving to Manchuria to escape Japanese rule. His father studied for the ministry in Pyeongyang and then moved his family back to Hamkyeog Buk Do, where they were when the Korean war broke out. Seo’s family was in one of the lucky families who found a place on an American boat leaving the Heungnam port, an exodus which is celebrated in South Korean stories of the war, but which ended with abandonment and death of many in the North. Growing up in South Korea, Lee attended Yonsei University and as a university student union leader was involved in demonstrations against the Park Chung Hee government and its implementation of the Yushin Constitution in 1972. One day the authorities surrounded the campus, rounded up the student protestors and took them away to the police station. Marked as a political troublemaker from that day on, Seo was dogged by plainclothes KCIA agents who attended all his classes disguised as students and harassed him at every turn, making it hard to work, study or carry on a regular

student life. By this time Seo's older brother and sister had moved to Canada and they invited Seo to come and join them. It was the only way Seo could escape the police harassment, so he accepted and moved to Toronto.⁶⁶

Seo's brother was a member of the Presbyterian Church that had broken away from the original TKUC congregation, but his sister was attending TKUC. Seo attended both. By this time, he was feeling the call to enter the ministry and was torn between whether to align himself with his brother's church or his sister's. One day he came across a book about the history of the United Church which tipped the scales in the UCC's favour. There was something about the national vision of the UCC that appealed to him, that it was a church created to fit the unique Canadian context. In his conversation with me he explained that he liked the UCC's "policy, direction and ethos," that it was "a new expression of faith for a new world." It was not easy to tell his brother who was looking for his help in the Presbyterian church or to break his family's Presbyterian tradition, but he did find support in TKUC for his goal to become a UCC minister. He began working for the church in 1974 and was eventually ordained into the ministry in 1987 after which he served both predominantly white and Korean churches in the Greater Toronto Area and Edmonton.⁶⁷

Because of his leadership role in the congregation and vision for the UCC, Seo was asked to help lead a denominational study looking into the relationship between Anglo and non-Anglo congregations. Seo and a colleague from an Italian congregation interviewed members from the 50 or so "ethnic congregations"⁶⁸ in the UCC. Generally, immigrants from different countries who sought a home within the UCC did so as part of congregations that retained the use of their

⁶⁶ Interview with Dong-Chun Seo, 12 November 2018.

⁶⁷ Interview with Dong-Chun Seo, 12 November 2018.

⁶⁸ Generally speaking this term was used to denote any congregation that was non-white and/or did not use English in worship.

own languages and cultures in worship. While this created cultural enclaves within the UCC where people were free to worship and relate in ways that were familiar to them in a foreign context, it meant that a sense of distance was created between many immigrants and the Anglo congregations of the UCC. But it was more than the choice of these different cultures to worship separately that was preventing a healthy interaction with Anglo-Christians. “When I interviewed the ethnic congregations in the 1970s... what I discovered,” said Seo, “was that ... [these] Congregations wanted to be part of the power structure and leadership opportunity [of the UCC]. But most Caucasian congregations were content to say, ‘You do your own thing.’”⁶⁹ In the report he wrote for the UCC, Seo noted that the relationship between ethnic congregations within the UCC and its white congregations was “too superficial” to promote mutual understanding and that ethnic peoples “have more frequent and ‘normal’ relationship with their own people, and even other ethnic peoples, than with [white] Canadians.”⁷⁰ In his opinion, too little was being done to overcome cultural barriers and bring people together in community.

Seo also noticed that Christian immigrants were not drawn to the UCC as a denominational home, because there was no equivalent in their countries. For those who did end up as part of the UCC, it took a lot of effort and time to try to educate them in the UCC ethos, which by definition was more inclusive and less doctrinaire on theological issues than either Presbyterian or Methodist churches by virtue of the fact that in Canada these two denominations had merged. But this did not mean that they were necessarily more open or inclusive when it came to issues like race and ethnicity. After all, the agenda of the UCC, and indeed one of the rationales for its

⁶⁹ Interview with Dong-Chun Seo, 12 November 2018.

⁷⁰ Dong-Chun Seo, A Research Study of Ethnic Ministries: Toronto Area, dated February 1978, File #10, Box #5, Accession #2009.014C, United Church Archives, Toronto.

creation, was the assimilation of non-Anglo-Protestants into “civilized” Canadian society.⁷¹ Seo noticed that there was no strategy on the part of the UCC for promoting the contribution of ethnic congregations to the leadership of the church and few resources were dedicated to ethnic congregations to encourage their participation. As a result, he observed, there was a serious deficit of trust. In Seo’s judgement this was due in large part to the absence of any church structure to accommodate ethnic churches. “Maybe discrimination was [also] a factor,” he confided. Seo’s report called on the UCC to “share your power and share your leadership” and urged the white churches to “be involved with ethnic congregations 7 days a week.” But he finds that today ethnic congregations still cry out for recognition within UCC structures.⁷²

While Seo spent a lot of time and effort on at the national and regional level of church government, valuable leadership was also being offered at the local level. Through the 1970s more and more Koreans offered themselves as leaders in Anglo-congregations. They faced considerable obstacles to their leadership and had to work hard to carve out a place for themselves. In the process, they discovered they had unique and valuable gifts to offer members of the Anglo-community who were open to them. One of these Korean leaders, and the first female Korean minister of the UCC, will be the subject of our next section.

Kay Cho

For my interview with Kay Cho (Cho Kyeong-ja) we met in her home in the community of Richmond Hill. The day saw one of the first snowfalls of the winter. We sat in her cozy living

⁷¹ Phyllis Arihart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), 12; Brian Clarke, “English Speaking Canada from 1854,” *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin eds. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 357; Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, “The United Church of Canada: A Church Fittingly National,” In *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 204.

⁷² Interview with Dong-Chun Seo, 12 November 2018.

room looking out big windows at the large flakes of snow coming down. She served tea and we talked about people we knew in common before starting in on the interview. The contrast of cold and warmth between the weather and the inside of Cho's house, upon reflection, mirrored the contrasting experiences of rejection and welcome that Cho was about to share with me.

We began the interview by talking about her origins and about her first encounters with Canadian missionaries. Cho was born in northwestern Korea near the Yalu River bridge on the border with Manchuria. Two years ahead of the Korean War her family crossed over to the south. As a young woman, she entered Ewha Women's University in Seoul, where she met her first missionaries, including two female UCC missionaries, Dorothy Hurd and Elda Struthers. These women were an important influence in her life and she credits them for giving her a broader vision of the world beyond Korea.⁷³ Years later, the recollection of their ability to move into and serve the Korean community encouraged her to believe she could do the same in Canada.⁷⁴ After graduating from university she was granted a World Council of Churches (WCC) scholarship to study in San Francisco. Following 2 years of study, she returned to Korea with a Master's degree in theology.⁷⁵ After marriage, her husband was urged by his family to move to Canada. His sister had immigrated as a nurse and had brought her mother over to help when she had a baby. To leave Korea at that time was a big sacrifice for Cho. She had a good job as a chaplain at a hospital and lots of good friends and colleagues. But she was also pregnant and so consoled herself with the thought that at least she would have a baby to keep her busy in her new home. Not long after her arrival in Burlington, Ontario in 1971, her baby was

⁷³ Interview with Kay Cho, 21 November 2018

⁷⁴ Interview with Kay Cho conducted by HyeRan Kim-Cragg for McGeachy Project, (2011-2013).

⁷⁵ Interview with Kay Cho, 21 November 2018.

delivered, but tragically died soon afterwards. It was an experience of deep grief and isolation for Cho who had no one outside of her family to reach out to for comfort or support.⁷⁶

As a way of recovering from her grief Cho tried to find work to keep her mind busy. She took some typing and stenography courses and worked as a secretary. She eventually found a job at McMaster University and later at Scarborough College when her family moved to Toronto. But secretarial work was not something that demanded enough of her gifts and so she started to think about church leadership. By this time, she was attending a United Church congregation that happened to be near her house in Scarborough. She would also visit TKUC on occasion and had the opportunity to meet with former UCC missionary Elda Struthers who had taught her at Ewha University in Korea and was now living in Toronto. Cho inquired about ways she could work for the church and began the process to become a minister. “There were so many requirements,” she remembered, “although I had already received a lot of education [in Korea and San Francisco.]” She was sent to the Centre for Christians Studies and then to Emmanuel College. Finally, she was commissioned as a diaconal minister in 1979 and then ordained in 1984, the first Korean woman to serve in these roles in the UCC.⁷⁷

For Cho, her unique accomplishment was “only a matter of survival,” a way to cling to life in a “cold wilderness.” It was about finding a purpose for herself in a place where she often felt “bewildered.” If the road towards leadership in the UCC had seemed daunting at first, she had been given some hope in 1974 when the UCC elected its first non-white moderator, Wilbur Howard, a Black man from Ottawa. “I thought, this is interesting,” she recalls, and came to the conclusion that “[t]his church is really open to everybody.” But it wasn’t going to be so easy and the reality of racism that she quickly encountered in the process was disillusioning. During a

⁷⁶ Interview with Kay Cho, 21 November 2018

⁷⁷ Interview with Kay Cho, 21 November 2018.

regional meeting of congregations, complaints were made about the three Koreans (including herself) that were seeking ordination under their supervision. “What do we do with these people?” someone asked referring to the Koreans, “Congregations won’t accept them [as their ministers once they are ordained.]”⁷⁸ It seems that congregations were willing to allow Koreans to enter the process towards being ordained, but when it came to actually ordaining them, few could imagine that another congregation would be willing to accept them as their minister.

Cho’s first experience of work within the UCC was also a tremendous challenge. It was a very “cold” work environment. Cho was assistant to a male minister who had served for a time as a missionary in India. But the congregation had never had a “second” minister or a “person of colour.” “You can’t imagine how hard I had to work to prove myself,” she said. The children “teased” her about her Asian-ness, mocking her appearance and singing songs that made fun of her as an Asian. There were no other Asians in the congregation. On one occasion a couple refused to be married by her.⁷⁹ At the time, she remembers, racism was a fearful word and people were very reluctant to talk about it. Finally, facing a financial decision between keeping a second minister or building a new parking lot, the congregation elected to let Cho go and build the parking lot. But Cho noticed that, not long afterwards, the congregation hired another white female minister to take her place.⁸⁰

Cho persevered, nevertheless. Her next congregation seemed to be more ready to embrace her and she was determined to share what she could of herself, including her Koreanness. Cho discovered congregation members in need of her special cultural resources. On one occasion, for example, a grieving widow came to see her, anxious and distraught that her family had been

⁷⁸ Interview with Kay Cho, 21 November 2018.

⁷⁹ Kay Cho interview with HyeRan Kim-Cragg for McGeachy Project, conducted during 2011-2013.

⁸⁰ Kay Cho interview 21 November 2018.

unable to find ways to share their grief or heal from the loss of her husband. Cho told her of the Korean practice of *jesa* (discussed in chapter 1).⁸¹ This was the annual gathering of a family to mark the death of a loved one and share a meal in their honour. Ironically, *jesa* had been banned by missionaries in Korea because of its association with ancestral spirits. But the woman found the suggestion helpful and later reported that she had tried it and that the family had greatly benefitted from it.⁸²

Eventually Cho made connections with other racialized women in church leadership. One of these was Dr. Wenh In Ng, a professor at Emmanuel College in Toronto. Together they came up with the idea of a gathering exclusively for racialized women in the UCC. It was the first of its kind and faced some opposition from white women, even missionaries, who felt they should be able to attend as well. But Cho was adamant. Racialized women needed their own space, she and Ng argued. It was a controversial stance, but both felt that racialized women had experiences that could only be safely shared with others who shared those same experiences. White people, even women, were likely to misunderstand. They tended to dominate conversations and to object to certain discussions about white privilege or prejudice. In addition, racialized women tended to be less vocal and needed more encouragement to speak out. The program was a great success and ran for almost 20 years starting in the early 1990s, the last one held in 2010.⁸³

“Few Interested in Being My Brother”

⁸¹ 祭祀 - 제사

⁸² Kay Cho interview 21 November 2018.

⁸³ Kay Cho interview 21 November 2018.

Korean ministers were not the only ones struggling with structural racism in the UCC. Indigenous leaders in the UCC were also upset by the way white Christians in the Canadian denomination continued to treat indigenous people. Stan McKay, UCC minister from the *Koostakak* First Nation in Manitoba and later first indigenous Moderator of the United Church of Canada (1992-1994), in the 1970s and 80s was one who had a platform to speak directly to the church. Following a church consultation on racism in 1980, he said the UCC had failed to recognise its racism despite a number of opportunities to do so. There are many in the church “who want to be my father,” he said, “but few are interested in being my brother.” McKay charged the UCC with acting out of “liberal guilt” rather than “any commitment to obliterate [racism] structurally.” Indeed, it seemed to him that racism was at the very bottom of the UCC’s list of priorities.

McKay said that working with the UCC’s Division of Mission in Canada (DMC) was one of his most “frustrating experiences,” echoing Seo’s complaint that no resources or staff were being dedicated to working with non-white communities. McKay found this lack of interest perplexing given the presence of 19 Indian congregations, 7 native ministers and an active Indian elders council within the UCC. This indigenous leadership, McKay said, was “rapidly becoming a remnant” of what it once was because of neglect. In contrast to his work with the DMC which dealt with internal Canadian church issues, however, McKay found his work with the DWO was like a breath of fresh air. The DWO worked closely with missionaries and overseas churches. This branch of the church, he found, had a “clear understanding of institutional and structural racism” and could teach the rest of the UCC a lot. He lamented, however, that they appeared to have been muzzled within the Canadian church context.⁸⁴ McKay was expressing a degree of

⁸⁴ “Sharp Criticism for UCC”, *Observer*, September, 1980, vol.151, no.3, 7.

solidarity with the immigrants within the church as well as gratitude, and maybe even envy, at what they had managed to accomplish in changing the structure and thinking of the DWO. He would go on to collaborate with many immigrant leaders of the UCC and the “All Native Circle” of indigenous churches and “ethnic congregations” found natural allies in one another.

McKay’s assessment is interesting for a couple of reasons. For one thing, it affirms the Korean leadership’s experience of racism within the UCC and their complaints that indigenous members of the UCC had been making for decades.⁸⁵ For another, it suggests that overseas the UCC had been learning far more than it had been at home. We can infer from McKay’s comments that the part of the church working with non-western Christians overseas had managed to change its institutional culture, but that these lessons had not managed to permeate the rest of the church. Like McKay, others had likewise noticed a severe disconnection between the activities of missionaries and its supervising branch of the UCC and the rest of the church such that what missionaries had been learning was not being passed on to people in the pews.⁸⁶ There is a profound irony in this. Through the 1960s and 1970s, missionaries had become an “embarrassment”⁸⁷ to the UCC and Canadian society that had once enthusiastically supported them. In the 1970s and 1980s, many felt a distaste for the churches’ missionary past. On university campuses there was “a complete emotional and intellectual block to the word

⁸⁵ Michael Twovoice, “As An Indian Thinks” *Missionary Monthly*, April 1951. 163.

⁸⁶ Ruth Compton Brouwer, “From Missionaries to NGOs”, in *Canada and the Third World: Overlapping Histories*, Karen Dubinsky, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016); Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, “From Colonization to Right Relations: The Evolution of United Church of Canada Missions with Aboriginal Communities,” 103.1 (398) April 2014 *Mission in the Busan Assembly*, *International Review of Mission*.153-171; Joan Wyatt, “The 1970s: Voices from the Margins” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, Donald Schweitzer, ed. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012).

⁸⁷ Alwyn Austin and Jamie S. Scott. *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: Representing Religion at Home and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 5.

‘missionary’[.]”⁸⁸ And yet, spurred by criticism from overseas churches, it had been the missionaries themselves that had driven the agenda for a change in the UCC’s approach to missions. In 1962, the Canadian denomination established the *Commission on World Mission*, whose mandate it was to look into the UCC’s missionary past and come up with recommendations for the future direction of the church. In their report the Commission acknowledged the undertone of imperialism, which had been a feature of the UCC missionary enterprise since the beginning. They observed that, historically, missions had been presented in a way to make them “more acceptable” to the Canadian public and conceal the reality of what was in truth the churches’ part of a many-pronged Western invasion of Africa and Asia.⁸⁹ For this, the church was now in need of repentance, it confessed. But the report acknowledged this would not be easy as the West had a “heritage of domination” and new forms of domination continued to appear.⁹⁰ What the church needed now was to reject colonial concepts of mission in favour of a vision in which people from different places and religions worked together as partners.⁹¹ While it was easy to see *that* this must be done, it was not easy to see *how* it could be. Part of the answer, according to the Commission, lay in an attitude of openness to the contributions of Christians from other lands. Its findings advised that Christians in the UCC should be ready to receive interpretations and practices of Christianity, which did not derive from their culture.⁹² The task of preparing UCC members for this new approach was acknowledged to be “important, complex and difficult”⁹³ and that there was a need to guard

⁸⁸ Ruth Compton Brouwer, “From Missionaries to NGOs”, in *Canada and the Third World: Overlapping Histories*, Karen Dubinsky, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 139.

⁸⁹ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 312.

⁹⁰ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 322.

⁹¹ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 336.

⁹² *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 426.

⁹³ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 431-432.

against “slipping back inadvertently into outgrown ways of thinking.”⁹⁴ The Commission recognized that they could not supply all the answers regarding the path forward and that there was a need to live with uncertainty, but its final recommendation was “that constant, updated, systematic, well planned and challenging education be directed to the whole church from the pulpit and every other channel open to the church[.]”⁹⁵

A plan to educate the average member of the UCC never materialized. To the extent that the UCC did begin to challenge its own colonial past it was not at the grassroots with congregations, but only in certain departments and at certain levels of the church bureaucracy.⁹⁶ The Chair of the Board of World Mission (predecessor of the DWO) lamented, in 1971, that the UCC membership was “still generally living with a Nineteenth Century concept of mission” and that the clergy, far from educating the congregation about this urgent matter on a weekly basis, were themselves largely in the dark. He characterized the communication gap as “colossal.”⁹⁷ 16 years later, on the eve of his election to lead the UCC, Sang Chul Lee was telling his congregation that the Canadian church still had a long way to go in addressing issues of structural racism. As the mainline Canadian denomination continued its steep decline, the pioneering work of Korean Christians to make it a relevant institution in the postcolonial era had only just begun.

On hearing of his election to the moderator of the UCC, it is reported that the Korean pastor walked “softly” to the podium and confessed his surprise. “I just didn’t think the church

⁹⁴ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 433.

⁹⁵ *Report of the Commission on World Mission*, UCC, Proceedings, GC22, 1966, 435.

⁹⁶ Joan Wyatt, “The 1970s: Voices from the Margins” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, Donald Schweitzer, ed. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 128.

⁹⁷ Ruth Compton Brouwer, “From Missionaries to NGOs”, in *Canada and the Third World: Overlapping Histories*, Karen Dubinsky, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford eds., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 137.

was ready to elect an ethnic person,” he told the assembly.⁹⁸ It is possible they really weren’t. At Toronto Korea United Church (TKUC) the people he ministered to knew all too well the frustrations of living in a nation dominated by “Anglo Saxons.” And many of Lee’s Korean colleagues in positions of leadership in the UCC faced the same challenges he had in trying to work within the white church. “Canadians often ask why Koreans came to Canada. I suppose they want to hear about the plight of Korea, the North-South conflict, the economic situation, the unrest. But I prefer to make a point about what it means to be ‘Canadian,’” he wrote in a book published the year of his election.⁹⁹ Lee had developed a number of strategies for dealing with the problematic attitudes of white Canadians who persistently regarded Koreans and other immigrants as outsiders. One of his favourites was to remind them of a well-loved song whose verse ran, “This land is your land, this land is my land... This land was made for you and me.” When presented with the song, people would often laugh, perhaps surprised that Lee would know it and bring it up in the context of a discussion about Korean migration. So Lee would put the question to them directly, “To whom do you refer when you sing ‘you’?” Not only were people not imagining new immigrants when they sang the song, many in the UCC could still not see a reflection of themselves and what they could become in their new moderator.

Conclusion

Starting in 1965, Korean Christians struggled to assert a place for themselves in the stories and songs of Canadian society and the UCC. As they struggled to get in, Canadian were quietly letting themselves out. There is reason to believe that the connection between the increase in

⁹⁸ Hugh McCullum, “Lee’s church: celebrate, not retreat,” September 1988, New Series Vol.52, No.3, 8.

⁹⁹ Sang-Chul Lee and Eric Weingartner, *The Wanderer: The Autobiography of a United Church Moderator* (Winfield, BC: Woodlake Books, 1989), 115.

migrants trying to find a place in Canadian Protestant denomination and the decline of these same denominations, though not causal, might not be entirely accidental either. The difficulty that Koreans had finding a place within the Canadian church highlights the degree to which Canadian religious institutions were unprepared for the advent of the postcolonial era. The inability of the UCC to provide their white members with the tools they needed to deconstruct structural racism and create positive spaces in which intercultural relationships could blossom speaks to its growing irrelevance in Canadian postcolonial society post-1965.

The wing of the UCC which had been charged with the oversight of missionaries had benefitted from their experience and had managed to adjust its discourse and practice in response to challenges from non-Western Christians. But members of the Canadian church seemed unexposed, unable or unwilling to hear the message and, due to the prevailing tendency to scapegoat missionaries for colonial attitudes and religious chauvinism, remained blind to issues of structural racism in their own secular and ecclesial institutions. Institutional leaders, too, had difficulty letting go of their positions of privilege and power. As a result, colonial patterns of racism and paternalism persisted in UCC pews and organizational structures. Indigenous leaders in the UCC underscored this reality when they noticed that those in the church who had worked closely with missionaries were much more open to indigenous concerns whereas those charged with setting policy in Canada were almost impossible to work with.¹⁰⁰

The stories that Lee and his Korean Christian community told about their lives in Canada not only challenged stories that white Anglo members Canadian society were telling themselves in the 1970s and 1980s, today they also reframe a historiography which

¹⁰⁰ For example, Indigenous leader Stan McKay was disgusted by the inability of the UCC to respond to indigenous Christians' concerns, as is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

has not adequately accounted for the influence of the non-western Christianity on mainline Canadian Protestantism. In the mid-1960s when Canada changed its immigration laws and reached an immigration agreement with South Korea, Korean Christian leadership began to come to Canada even as the numbers of missionaries sent overseas from Canada continued to dwindle. At the very same moment, mainline Protestant churches began to shrink after more than a century of growth. Western church decline has been the subject of much debate among historians of religion since the 1980s, but the scholarship has tended to focus on issues “internal” to Western societies and has not fully explored “external” factors such as the global context of postcolonialism and the inflow of immigrants from non-western nations.

The experiences of Korean Christians in Canada highlight the postcolonial realities and implications of migration, racism and hybridity. Historical data discussed and interpreted from the Toronto Korean United Church (TKUC) and Korean Christian leadership within the UCC reveal that UCC policy and culture was slow to respond to these realities, a fact that would have greatly diminished its relevance in a multicultural Canadian society, a fact that helps to explain its decline from the 1960s on. This fact suggests that further research into the experiences of immigrant Christians within established Canadian churches would contribute to understanding the history of those churches in the postcolonial period.

CONCLUSION

The first death of a child of the mission was that of John Foote, who died in 1909 at the age of eight. Two children of Reverend and Mrs. A.F. Robb died during this period: Marian, at the age of six in 1910, and Alexander, at the age of two in 1912. ¹

In July 1941, Dr. Scott and Dr. Murray paid a visit to the newly acquired mission cemetery plot in Hamheung to which all graves from other mission stations had been transferred. As they bowed their heads in prayer in the last prayer of remembrance, the Japanese caretaker's wife reverently participated.²

William Scott, in *Canadian Mission to Korea*, 1989

In the process of preparing for retirement my wife and I took a day and went to the York Cemetery where we purchased a plot of land suitable for two graves. It was the first real estate transaction of our lives. I had conducted funerals for many church members with a sad heart. The thought of being buried beside them gave me a sense of gratitude and it seemed fitting. In my funeral sermons I had often preached, “As immigrants, when we bury our beloved in this strange ground with the pain of loss we are putting down roots.” For a wanderer like me to find a place to be buried is something to be grateful for. How much more the thought that I am sending down a root among the many others that Korean immigrants have put down here. ³

Sang Chul Lee, in *God, Humanities' Hope*, 1989

For both Canadian missionary and Korean immigrant, their final resting place and those of their family and friends were matters of great importance. Reflecting on the UCC Korea Mission, missionary William Scott did not omit a special mention of the missionary children who had been buried in Korea or of the last chance to bid farewell to their graves before being forcibly deported by the Japanese at the outbreak of the Pacific War. In the same way, Sang

¹ William Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea, 1898-1970s*, revised and expanded by J. Greig McMullin (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2009), 469.

² Scott, *A History of the Canadian Mission to Korea*, 641.

³ Sang-Chul Lee, *Hananim, Inryueui Heuimang* (Toronto: Grover Printing, 1989), 12.

Chul Lee's reflection on the funerals he had done in Canada and of his own future burial spot bring into focus the struggles of Canadian immigrants in a "strange" land. These poignant stories from both sides of the Pacific Ocean highlight the tensions that existed in the sense of place for Canadian missionary and Korean immigrant alike. The stories of their graves convey a sense of tenuous attachment to a place at the very same time as they accentuate an opposite feeling of foreignness or "unhomeliness," a hallmark experience of postcolonial reality.⁴ Whether Canadian missionary or Korean migrant, a sense of home was something that was always in the process of becoming; they often could already feel at home even as they realized that they were not yet accepted or viewed as part of that place by others. The history of the relationship between the Korean church and the Canadian mission has likewise never been static or settled; its consequences are still being lived out on both sides of the Pacific. The historical transitions between colonial and postcolonial moments, between missionary enterprises and global migrations present an important context for understanding, among other things, the changes that have occurred in the Canadian national landscape in general and in Canadian Protestantism in particular.

Canadian Church historiography has examined, piece meal, the related historical phenomena of the rise and fall of Canadian mainline Protestantism, Canadian immigration and the evolution of the Missionary Enterprise. Among the most significant findings have been that 1. Canadian Protestant denominations in general, and the UCC in particular, sought to be "national" churches based on an ethnically defined notion of nationhood that aligned itself with British Imperialism, a self-understanding that rapidly lost its meaning in the 1960s; 2.

⁴ Cynthia Sugars, ed., *The Unhomely State: Theorizing English-Canadian Postcolonialism* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004).

immigration of Christians into the Protestant churches changed those churches; and 3. encounters on the mission field led to transformations for missionaries and their churches as well as for people to whom they had been sent.

Canadian church historian Phyllis Airhart poignantly noted that “The challenge of diversity – both religious and racial – sounded a knell for the aspirations that had energized those who founded the United Church.”⁵ This history of the UCC and its mission to Korea in the period following the 1960s contributes to our knowledge of how that religious and racial diversity was experienced both overseas and in Canada. It does so by using an approach that unites the three phenomena of Canadian Protestant decline, Canadian immigration and Missionary Enterprise into one picture and interpreting them within a postcolonial context.

A history of the relationship between Korean Christians and Canadian missionaries from its beginnings reveals that Koreans did not share the Canadian version of Protestant nationalism and in fact had their own version that challenged unexamined contradictions in the missionaries’ approach to missions. During the period of military dictatorship in South Korea, Korean Christians began to articulate their objections to the Canadian missionary attitudes and policies which had been entrenched since their arrival three generations earlier. As the South Korean Democratization Movement gathered steam, the PROK successfully forced the transformation of UCC missionary culture and political economy. At the same time, this transformation contributed to a new Korean theological approach that recontextualized Christianity within the postcolonial era and deconstructed the authority of Western Christianity. UCC women, within the gendered *sarangbang* space, were also transformed by their experiences of political oppression and resistance. Later, as they arrived in Canada as immigrants, Koreans continued to

⁵ Phyllis Arihart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), 152.

challenge the UCC with a new vision for the Canadian church and nation in a way that was consistent with the critiques developed in Korea. Their presence in the Canadian church called into question its colonial nationalist foundations just as it helped contextualize its diminishing influence in postcolonial Canadian society.

The development of Korean Christianity had a significant impact on the UCC and the Canadian religious landscape. That impact cannot be fully understood outside the history of the Canadian Missionary Enterprise. Rather than empty vessels that allowed themselves to be filled with foreign ideas and culture, Koreans who came into contact with Canadian missionaries were in fact pioneers that found in Christianity fertile soil in which to nurture and propagate what was already theirs. Korean agency and the ways that Korean Christians adopted the religion on their own terms are responsible for many of the changes that occurred in the Canadian mission in Korea and threw the church in Canada into postcolonial relief. Accounts of the beginning of Korean Christianity, for example, show that Korean Christians did not entirely let go of their past religious and cultural traditions. While Christianity provided a source of emotional and political support as well as a vehicle with which to transition into a modern society, it also became an ark of precious Korean traditions, notably the Korean language and *hangeul* script which missionaries helped to resurrect, but also such traditions as *jesa* which were frowned on by Western missionaries. While many Koreans did abandon the tradition after they converted, many did not. Kim Yakyeon, the leader of the Myeongdong community, is one example. Another example is the Revd. Kay Cho who, decades later, introduced it to Canadian parishioners as a way of guiding them through their experiences of grief and loss. Thus, not only was the tradition kept alive in the Korean context and church, it was also passed on to the Canadian church and context through the channel of Korean Christian leadership. More

generally with regard to the function of Christianity in preserving a distinct Korean culture, just as the early Korean congregations had done in Korea, Korean Christian communities in Canada used the church as a way to preserve and promote their culture and language in a strange land.

As the etymology of the word ‘mission’ implies, the history of the Canadian mission in Korea is defined by the movement of people. The initial movement of Canadian missionaries across geographical and national boundaries is only the tip of the iceberg and beginning of a much larger movement. The conversion of Koreans to Christianity was connected to the migration of large numbers of Koreans north across the boundary between Korea and China. The ascendancy of communist forces in the same region led to a mass exodus across the 38th parallel to South Korea for many of those same Korean converts. Finally, the global economic order led to the diasporic scattering of many Koreans outside of East Asia. Relationships with missionaries contributed to the arrival of many in Canada. The migration of Korean Christians to Canada turned out to be at least as significant to Canada as the small envoy of Canadian missionaries had been to Korea.

In addition to a history of mutual influence, what has become clear in the course of this study is the relationship between religious and national identities. Nationalism was a defining feature of Protestantism as it was presented to Koreans by Canadian missionaries. Canadians believed that their Anglo version of the Protestant religion was an important vehicle for “civilization” under the influence of strong and stable (imperial) government. They took for granted that a global population of Protestants would help to unite the world in a new form of Christendom and build understanding between different nations through a kind of religio-cultural uniformity. However, Koreans did not passively receive what they were being offered; they countered with their own version of Protestant nationalism. For Korean Christians, Christian

religious practice and cultural preservation meant standing up to colonial governments and subverting foreign imperial hegemonies. Eventually Korean Christians, struggling under a national government which had usurped the power of the people and aligned itself with Western American hegemony, began to articulate their religio-political commitments in terms of a post-national concept, *minjung*. The *minjung* were a diverse group of people united by their culture of opposition against oppression. They were not a *minjok*, a population compliant with an oppressive nation-state.

Nation-states and nationalisms, as defining features of the contemporary landscape, are challenged by this history. Missionaries who travelled and lived in Korea spent decades of their life there, buried family members there, and made some of their closest friends there. Rather than merely converting others, they were themselves converted and transformed. As missionary Marion Current once said to me in conversation, “I’m an egg. I’m white on the outside, but yellow on the inside.” For her as for many others, Korea was home and she was, in some very real sense, Korean. Sang Chul Lee called four different nations home over the course of his life and sought to articulate for members of his congregation the reality that they could be Korean and Canadian at the same time without shame or contradiction. In Manchuria and northeastern Korea as well as in South Korea during the Democratization Movement, missionaries found that their empathy for the people they worked with compelled them to transgress their traditional national allegiances and sometimes, even, Korean national laws. These stories of people on the move defy neat understandings of nations and nationalities and also question the viability of nation-states and nationalisms in the postcolonial world.

Finally, the challenge that Minjung theology has leveled at religious categories, including Christianity itself, resonates with many of the experiences connected to the Canadian Missionary

Enterprise in Korea. In the same way that a nation cannot ultimately limit the political or ethical dimensions of human being, the history of the Korean-Canadian church relationship shows that Christians crossing national boundaries challenged Christian categories. Interactions between Koreans and Canadian missionaries led to challenges to Christianity's claims to be able to define and control the means of redemption and salvation. This constitutes a radical challenge to Western traditions of rigid definitions of religions and religious communities.

In short, the postcolonial history of Canada's largest Protestant denomination in light of its mission to Korea underlines the liminality of human identities, particularly in the postcolonial era marked by an accelerated movement of people and blending of cultures. The identity of Korean Christians underwent tremendous change between 1898 and 1988. Each new context meant a reinvention of religious and national identities. Likewise, Canadian missionaries had to reinvent themselves and their institutions over the same period. Those transformations were visible in moments of liminality, be it on the contested Manchurian plains, the stairwell of a missionary house, in the gendered *sarangbang* space of the Democratization Movement, or in the shrinking Anglo congregations of the UCC, when Canadian and Korean interacted with each other. In each of these environments, new identities emerged for Canadians as much as for Koreans as they transitioned from patriarch/matriarchs to friends, from models of moral uprightness to flawed human beings with a blemished past, from leaders to supporters, from landlords to tenants, from religious authorities to students of a new theology. While some of these new identities were fleeting, they all point to a new horizon of human possibility and a possible new chapter in Canadian Protestant history.

The United Church of Canada (UCC), as the largest Protestant denomination in Canada with an extensive history of missionary activity at home and abroad, has provided a focus for a history of the influence of non-Western Christians on Canadian Christianity. This study has deliberately limited itself to one single and enduring relationship between a community of Korean Christians and Canadian missionaries, a relationship that was formalized in the PROK-UCC partnership following WWII. The PROK-UCC partnership was the focus of most of the dissertation, chapters 2 through 5, but has its roots in Manchuria and northeastern Korea at the turn of the 20th century before there was a PROK or UCC. The Korean Christian - Canadian missionary relationship has been a useful relationship to study because it spanned almost the entire period of the Canadian Mission Enterprise. Unlike the Canadian mission to China, for example, which started earlier and involved more missionaries but came to an abrupt end in 1953, a Canadian missionary presence in Korea continued in the post-war years and gave time for relationships in the postcolonial era to evolve. The relative strength of the Korean church compared to the Japanese or Indian church and the incongruent position of missionaries vis à vis the colonial authority created a unique environment where Koreans had more scope to use Christianity for their own ends in clear contrast with missionary attitudes and actions regarding colonial and imperial powers. UCC missions in Angola and Trinidad were less extensive, left less material for study and did not produce any distinct migrant congregations within the UCC. This is not to say, however, that these other missions would not also provide valuable material for a similar study. A comparison of these different missions and their impact on the Canadian religious and national landscape also promises to be rich.

The UCC was, of course, not the only Canadian Protestant church deeply committed to the Missionary Enterprise either. A study of the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Anglican, or other Protestant

church missions, individually or in comparison, would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of non-western Christianities on Canada and its Protestant churches. It goes without saying that Catholic missions overseas and their relationship to Canadian congregations would provide important material as well. Collectively, Canadian churches of all stripes have, through missionary activity, come in contact with societies all over the globe in hundreds of diverse cultural and political contexts. A study of the influence upon Canadian society and its institutions of these numerous and diverse religious encounters would be an enormous but illuminating project. The extent of Canada's involvement in the Missionary Enterprise and the role of missions in the formation of national institutions and identity means that there is a lot more that can be done with missionary archives to understand, not only the history of the Canadian church, but also Canadian society more broadly.

Study of Korean membership within the Canadian church could also be expanded to encompass different Korean congregations, whether inside or outside mainline Protestant denominations. Many Korean immigrants, because of the strength of the Presbyterian missions in Korea, located themselves within the Presbyterian church. Today there is a much larger group of Koreans in the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) than there is within the UCC, despite the fact that the PCC is a much smaller denomination without the direct missional ties that were transferred to the UCC in 1925. The experience of the PCC would be quite different than the UCC because of the relative size of the Korean community within it and the different mission history. However, there is an even larger group of Korean Christians that do not associate with any established Canadian church, but rather have formed independent congregations or continue to relate to a denomination in Korea. What are their histories with the Canadian Missionary

Enterprise? What kinds of experiences have they had in Canadian society? How have they managed, or not, to reconcile their Korean Christian traditions with the new Canadian context?

One of the questions that presents itself in this study is with regard to the demise of a Canadian Protestant nationalism and its consequences for Canadian national identity, if not for Canada itself. Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald, for example, point to the integral role that Canada's Protestant churches have played in supporting Canadian democracy and social institutions.⁶ Is the current crisis of the Canadian Protestant denominations, like a canary in a coal mine, a signal of a looming identity crisis for the nation as a whole as it comes to terms with its colonial roots in a postcolonial age? Or is Canada simply in the process of successfully redefining itself as a secular nation, independent of a defining religious or ethnic character? What kinds of religious nationalisms are possible within a multi-religious nation? Will Canadian Protestantism be able to reinvent itself as a religion without a special claim to the "soul" of Canada?⁷ A study of the role of religion in nation building in the current Canadian postcolonial context would be a natural next step.

Finally, the memory of missionary undertakings is important for the sake of understanding international relationships. As the finishing touches are being made to this dissertation, the global community is engaged in an unprecedented effort to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 virus. Much of that effort is being coordinated internationally and Canadians are taking helpful lessons for their South Korean neighbours with regards to effective policy to bend the curve of the illness. These international relations have their beginnings in the Canadian missionary movement. Another example is the interest and ability of Canadians to travel to North Korea, an

⁶ Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald, *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2017), 11.

⁷ Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 4.

interest and ability that stems largely from historic Christian connections. Korean Canadians, such as Pastor Hyeon Soo Lim who was detained in North Korea in 2015 and spent two and a half years in prison, and Jeong Hak-pil who was interviewed for this dissertation are examples of this connection. Lingering memories of a missionary past may be the reason Canada is still able to exert some influence on North Korea⁸ in the same way that it continues to contribute to Canada's stature in China.⁹ An international or transnational approach to the Korean-Canadian mission relationship that contributes to an understanding of current international relationships and tensions is long overdue.

The graves of missionaries and Korean immigrants represent more than an ending. They also represent new beginnings. This was certainly the thinking of Sang Chul Lee when he purchased his grave plot in York Cemetery. His funeral plans, while a recognition of an ending, signified a new beginning, the discovery of a new home and a new history. Likewise, the passing of missionary children represented not only the death of young hopes and dreams, but the birth of an intercultural relationship that continues long after the missionary withdrawal from the north half of the Korean peninsula. Developments in Canadian mainline Protestantism likewise suggest the end of an era in which churches saw themselves as central and privileged organizations within a Western nation-state. But the legacy of their existence, good and bad, is

⁸ Tina Park, "The U.S. has failed in its handling of North Korea—creating an opportunity for Canada to prove it is 'back' on the world stage," *Maclean's Magazine*, Aug 14, 2017.

Viewed online at <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/as-the-north-korean-crisis-escalates-canada-must-step-up/> on 13 September 2019.

⁹ Nathan VanderKlippe, "China's history with missionaries forms modern Canada relations," *Globe and Mail*, April 14, 2017. Viewed online on 13 September 2019 at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/chinas-history-with-missionaries-forms-modern-canada-relations/article34714775/?cmpid=rss1&fbclid=IwAR25Tz5fe8wzADNHadO6JJGqAix3zVdfJXYkrWWI4w1SvvoPeO8PvMy5tl>

still very present in the Canadian postcolonial context and will likely shape our future. It is a legacy that calls for continued attention.

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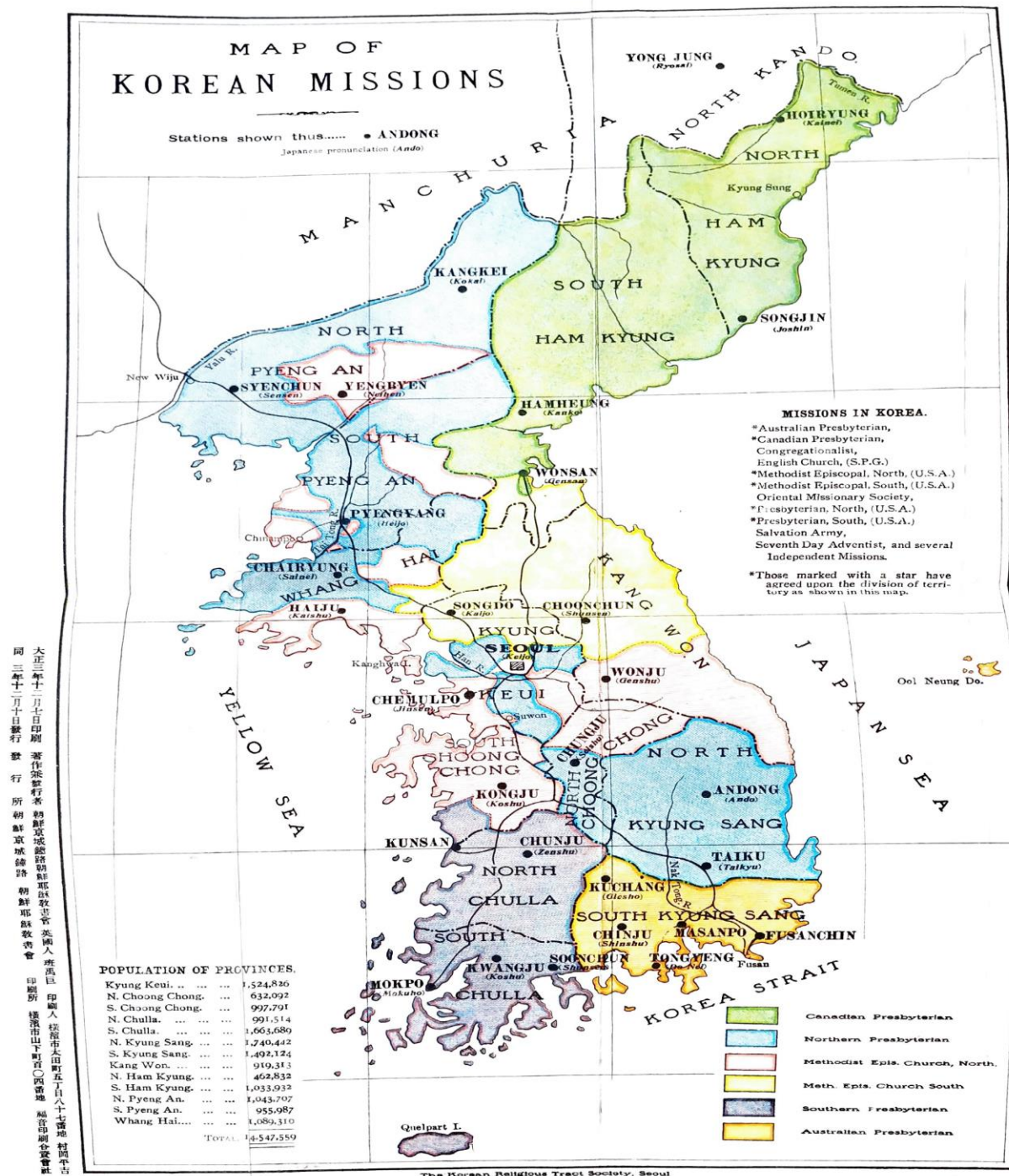
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APPENDIX

A.1 - A map of the division of mission fields as decided upon by American, Australian and Canadian missionaries representing Presbyterian and Methodist denominations.



ii A.2 - Map of Canadian Mission Stations circa 1915



<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/american-pyongyang-missionaries-north-korea>

ⁱⁱⁱ A.3 - Kim Yakyeong (front row third from the left) seated beside Canadian Missionary A.R. Ross (fourth from the left), dated 1936.



iv A.4 - Iri lands held by the UCC Korea Mission, 1963

<u>Land</u>				
<u>Location</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Land Kind</u>	<u>Size</u>	
Ma Dong, Iri	San 45-1	Forest	2670 pyung	
"	San 45-3	"	150	
"	165	Rice field	226	
"	165-1	Site	177	
"	165-3	Field	332	
"	165-4	"	2373.0	
"	165-2	"	918	
"	165-5	"	40	
"	165-7	Rice field	1185.0	
PyongWhaDong, Iri	39	Site	63	
"	40-9	"	219	
<u>Buildings</u>				
<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of site</u>	<u>Construction</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Note</u>
Ma Dong, Iri	San 45-1	Wood, grass roof	8	
"	"	"	8	
"	"	"	8	"
"	165-1	Wood, slate roof	21.50	
"	"	Iron roof	6	
"	40-1	Tile roof	42.36	Baker house
"	"	"	.84	Toilet
"	"	Iron roof	6.30	Storage
"	San 45-3	Cement block, tile roof	50.21	Findlay house
"	165-1	Wood, iron	12.0	Garage
Pyong Wha Dong, Iri	39	Wood, tile roof	15	
"	"	"	10	
SunWhaDong, Taejon	340-1 84-35 84-54	Wood, slate roof	35.47	
"	"	Wood, iron roof	2.25	Garage
"	"	Cement block, tile roof	11	Servants' house

^ A.5 - Below are images of Elsie Livingston's prayer shawl. Ms. Livingston is a resident of Saskatchewan who learned of the Korean Democratization Movement through her United Church congregation in the 1970s. She acquired the shawl through the same and continues to wear it on occasion.



^{vi} A.6 - Covers of the Seonguja Magazine, designed on silk screen by Kye Kim

